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MUSICAL JOTTINGS

J. PROUDMAN.

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MUSICAL JOTTINGS,

USEFUL AND HUMOROUS.

BY

JOSEPH PROUDMAN,

(Author of "Musical Lectures and Sketches.")

LONDON:

W. M. HUTCHINGS, 5, BOUVERIE STREET, FLEET STREET.

1872.

174. g. 37.

PREFACE.

A LITTLE book, published in 1869,* was so favourably received, that the Author is encouraged to issue the present volume to the same constituency of musical amateurs to whom the former book was respectfully dedicated.

Interesting musical topics are once more handled in a free and popular manner, which it is hoped may make the subjects interesting to the general, as well as to the musical reader.

Several chapters are meant to bear upon the important question of Church Music, or Congregational Praise, which the Author believes to be the true music of the Church.

His own practical acquaintance with the teaching of Popular Psalmody has led to many of these pages.

Some Papers, which were read before the Tonic Sol-fa College, are placed before the reader as they were read by the Author.

To instruct and amuse is the design of this small volume.

STOKE NEWINGTON,
February, 1872.

* "Musical Lectures and Sketches."

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PART I.

PAPERS ON PSALMODY.

THE GIFT OF SONG THE MEDIUM FOR PRAISE.

PRESUMING two things—first, that all will agree with me in holding it to be a decent and desirable thing to utter praises to Almighty God; and second, that this should be the united act of *all the people*, each man contributing his share of praise, with the spirit and the understanding—let us consider "the gift of song as the medium for praise."

The man who wonders why God has made the flowers, and decked the landscape so lavishly, will probably be surprised to hear, that music has its mission. But surely no Christian will think this a surprising thing, if it can be shown to be the fittest outlet for the emotions, in adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. There is the proper place for song in worship, and between the two extremes, viz., of those who believe only

in silent worship, and make "melody in their hearts," and those who attend only to fine music, and leave the heart out; the true place may be found in a refined, hearty, and spiritual exercise of congregational praise.

United song is the fittest medium for praise,—

1st. *Because it affords the means of united utterance.* If praises were uttered without tune, the result would be as the ravings of a mob, discordant and dreary. This necessity was met for ancient Israel, by the psalmists, whose sacred hymns were chanted by the people. Indeed, the precedents of sacred history are in favour of praise in song, from the time that Moses and the children of Israel sang their song of triumph, to the time when the children of Jerusalem sang "Hosanna!" or the cruel Jews only shouted "Crucify him, crucify him!" —from the time when the disciples and their Lord sang together their sacramental hymn, to the time when the Covenanters sang their comforting psalms in the desert, which neither cruelty, nor killing could quench.

As speech is necessary to thought, so is song to praise.

If music is anything, it is an emotional language. And what is praise but an emotional outgoing towards God? Real music is not merely a vocal, physical, or sensual enjoyment, any more than speech; both may be degraded in their uses, but both only become truly dignified, as they express soul and mind. But—

2nd. The gift of song is the fit medium for praise, *because of its powerful influence*, especially in its united utterance, both upon our own spirits and others also. We must sing something. It is quite unlikely that there is one man in ten thousand, who never attempted either to sing, hum, or whistle, something. And when you find one of these curiosities, it is more than likely, that the capacity is only very latent, and has been totally neglected. Many of this sort have been led to the enjoyment of song, who had long given it up. But to the large majority of people, singing is a delight, though the faculty is too lightly valued; while to young people song seems as natural as play. We may find many a two-year-old child who cannot speak two words together, but who can sing Rousseau's Dream with delight. The irreligious, the superstitious, and the profane, all recognise the potency of song, and seek to prostitute its magnetic influence to purposes of sensuousness, sensuality, or senseless levity; and the sooner its power and use, in *real* Christian worship, is more fully appreciated, the better for the world, and the better for the Church. But more: this united holy singing, is powerful *in its uses*. A grand and massive psalmody, which is instinct with emotional expression, decent utterance, and individual consecration, is *attractive;* and quite as legitimate an attraction, as eloquence in preaching, and far more legitimate, as well as attractive, than mere choral or ritual celebrations The difference is

marked; while one attracts the fancy, the other, *if true*, touches the heart; the one is a performance, the other a profession; the one attracts as an exhibition; the other, by its reflection of positive personal interest in religion, draws by its sincerity and reality.

Again, as it *aids the memory*, sacred song is valuable. Golden truths can be strung on the silver thread of music, which shall comfort, when faded memory has let go her hold, on chapter and verse. It is useful, as, if reverently done, the united and appropriate recital of holy aspirations, or longings, of spiritual hopes and fears, are magnified into majesty by numbers, producing an outward act of spiritual communion, scarcely to be surpassed by the united act of prayer—which it often is—or by the stillness of the sacramental hour. It is useful also, as it constantly keeps before the mind the truth, that praise is a duty, as well as a delight. A *personal duty*, which, like praying, loving, or believing, cannot be deputed. Christian people are called to be "kings and priests," and next to their privilege of interceding for the world, what priestly function can they assume more priestlike, than that of personally celebrating, the praise and worship of the God they serve? It is useful also to the Minister, bringing all spirits together into kindred moods, recalling them from errant thoughts, and leaving them more disposed for solemn counsels and prayer. Such praise is useful, as it attracts the onlooker,

who reads in the zealous act, that Christians are called to *do*, as well as to *be*. But this leads to a serious personal reflection.

3rd. The gift of song is a talent which *should not be hid*. In other words, the faculty of music should be cultivated with a view to its relation to Divine worship. The idea that any noise will do on the lip, so long as there is "melody in the heart," is, in my humble judgment, not honouring to God. This should bring us to the reflection, that we should see to *our own* acts, in this part of holy service. For instance, a deep bass voice is a gift, that is, a "talent;" it is no accident; it comes in accordance with Divine arrangements in nature—it has its mission in the world of song. How many there are, possessing such instruments of music, who never think of using them in their proper place, but who constantly make themselves, and others wretched, by desolate attempts to do, that which was never intended, viz., to sing treble! this they never can do. The same man might prefer to fly like a bird, rather than walk on his legs; there is only a degree of difference in the absurdity of these things. Nature and propriety forbid both. The voice which, misappropriated, is too often a nuisance, intelligently cultivated, is a splendid corner-stone in the Temple of Praise. This applies to the several gifts of the singing men, and the singing women too. A short but useful exhortation respecting this use of the gift might be—first, find your place in God's choir, and then, seek

worthily to fill it; being quite sure that, though some may seem to have five talents in music, Almighty Mercy has not left you without one, which should be used devoutly to His praise and glory.

4th. *Heart and mind* should be employed in every act of praise.

What a small consecration is manifest in some of our services. Sometimes there is intellect and skill, but little feeling and fervour; and sometimes a heartiness which, though sincere, is without mental grace, or fitness of expression. Without emotional feeling, Psalmody is not worship, it is only singing. It may be scientific and refined, but, without spirit life, it is a beautiful corpse, fair, but cold and senseless; without a sincere expression, it is little better than a bitter cheat, while, with it, it is worship. The strains of praise have to do with God. Eternal interests, and momentous incidents, both personal and practical, form our themes, and, without a mind and heart utterance, they are senseless and sad. Better untutored zeal with sincerity, that may be accepted of Heaven, than an icy unfeeling beauty, which never reaches there. But the *intelligent utterance* and *heart's* fervour should be given together. This would lead to a serious preparation of both, for the duty in hand. A hymn would bring the spirit, now sighing, now rejoicing, into the Eternal presence. Just as Moses removed his shoes before the burning bush, so the pious worshippers should

tread the place, where the Divine Presence is besought in praise. We could not then, sing solemn, sad, and tender themes, with a trumpet tongue, or strains of hope and thanksgiving, with a grave, uniform thickness of dull sound; but the psalm would live and move under spiritual impulses, and, through the intelligent medium of cultivated song, be an acceptable offering to God, and honouring to the Christian profession. Thus, with the soul of worship—that is, sincerity—we should give the body—that is, the best offering of our lips—in worship. The magic of consecration, will make even the outward manifestation of our service, acceptable to the Almighty. He who deigns to receive the sacrifice of sincere worship will, we may hope, honour those who present the same, on the silver altar of a fit, and beautiful expression. Heart and mind, being thus cultivated in this delightful service, united preparation of the heart and voice given, the neglected or misused talents, reconsecrated, we may all find much reward, and wondrous comfort, in exercising, the "gift of song as the medium for praise."

EXPRESSION IN WORSHIP.

THIS source of spiritual enjoyment and improvement, is much neglected. An expressionless face is dreary, an expressionless song is more desolate. No spirit light, no flashings of hope or fear, of joy or affection, in the eye,—and it might as well be of glass. No yearnings, no longings, no hopes, no fears, no rapture, no praise in our sacred psalmody—and it might as well be, the cry of the mocking bird, and is a delusion and a snare. The idea of personal identification with the thoughts and words of our hymns and psalms, is too often quite overlooked. We are prone to sing, as though the believing, the hoping, and confessing, the loving, and praising, were all exercises of anybody's heart but our own, and having to do with any time, but the present act of worship. This personal adoption and appropriation, of the sacred sentiments and emotions, is the first source of true expression in worship. Given this, what could be more impressive, than the united utterance of five hundred lips, all warmed into glowing worship by the loving, earnest sincerity of five hundred hearts? While charging no one with insincerity, are we thus sincere? When we profess

to worship the Holy One, do we burn the incense on the altar of our hearts, as well as our lips? Are we not often forgetful alike of the Almighty presence, and the reality of various acts of appeal and invocation to him? Real expression in our praise, suffers from want of true apprehension of what the act portends and involves. If it does anything, praise takes us into the very presence of God, or else it is a delusion. Indifference, or rashness in praise, should be shunned as much as irreverence in prayer. But how often do we sing as though this were true? Should we not aim at least as high as this, that trifling and subordinate things should not expel the spirit's worship, when we stand up in the act of public praise? If the inner thoughts, and holy realities of our themes were ever before us, how should we sing such words as "Rock of Ages, cleft for me!" What is it, if it is not an expression of personal love, personal trust, and personal penitence? And being this, how should we sing this tender, sacred hymn? If each singer sees in himself, the clinging, tearful, solitary, helpless one, hanging on to the Calvary, amid the black sky, and shaking earth, then the refrain means something. But, alas, that we should often be found singing, as though the Sacred Rock were a mere symbol, and the singers mere performers! But how different, if the sacred emotions of love, and gratitude, and of personal interest, fill the great congregation as they sing. The sound of such worship would be so potent, that methinks its

light would throw a radiance on the "Rock" itself, and make it a very beacon to poor spirits, dashed on wrecking billows and surrounded by solemn dangers. See how these Christians sing! as though they meant their praise, and loved its object. Few hymns have been more precious than this to dying men; its holy refrain has comforted many a spirit, as it peered forth into the darkness, ready to launch into the mysterious eternity: and we can only give fit expression to such a precious lyric, as we earnestly try to realise, *ourselves*, as the spirit, battling with the strife of sin and passion, and looking out through our own tears to the "Rock of Ages," and crying, "Let *me* hide *myself in Thee.*"

A neglect of this personal identification must lead, first, to *want of sincerity.* We fail sometimes to remember, that most of our words, in praise, are addressed to the Almighty, and refer to the great God. This should lead us to ask for ourselves, "Can I adopt these sentiments?" "Does this express my thoughts, and express my feelings?" A youth once asked a companion, why he did not sing a certain verse, and received the reply, "I could not; my conscience would not let me!" Sometimes we say,

> "O for a thousand tongues to sing
> My dear Redeemer's name"—

and, alas! give but a very imperfect consecration of the one tongue we have. Sometimes we sing—

> "His call we obey, like Abram of old,
> Not knowing our way, but faith makes us bold"—

and what kind of obedience, and what kind of faith, do we possess? At other times, we shout—

> "Stripp'd of my earthly friends,
> I find them all in one;
> And peace, and joy, that never ends,
> And heaven in Christ begun."

But, how mournfully must the Saviour look upon our rash assertion! How would He turn His look upon the angels who surround Him, and who veil *their faces with their wings*, as they cry, "Holy! Holy!" Surely if we religiously thought of what we were uttering before God, our sacred songs would become more spiritual, and soul-stirring in their expression, as they became more sincere.

Second, I would notice, that we want *natural*, and *sensible* utterance. Some pious and zealous folk, seem only to know of one way to express their devotion, in the worship of song, and that is, by loud and boisterous shouting. This, even to those not educated in music, must, upon reflection, appear at once to be an error of judgment. It sometimes makes me shudder, to hear a great congregation singing—

> "There are no acts of pardon passed
> In the cold grave to which we haste;
> But darkness, death, and long despair
> Reign in eternal silence there."

Surely, if such words should be used in public worship—which I very much doubt—they should be shrouded with the hush of

terror—tremble with the tear of penitence, or throb with Christian sympathy! In ordinary life, do we shout in the chamber of mourning? Do we vent our griefs in accents of jubilee? Do we express our fears in loud talk, or our affection with the emphasis of a brass band? Surely not! And when the emotions of the heart are enfolded in the themes of worship and praise, and are developed by natural and sensible utterance, we may sing, not only to the praise of God, our first aim, but also make the song of worship, so mighty in its power to touch the heart, that souls may be strengthened and comforted, and the very kingdom of heaven forwarded, by the spiritual songs of the church.

Third, we want *distinct*, and *personal* interest, in worship. Some are inclined to suppose, that the principal motive which should induce attendance at the place of worship, is to hear, and to get some good, forgetting that the title we love best to give to our sacred building (place of worship) implies, that we go up to utter *praise*, to worship, to adore; not to hear all this done, but *to do it*—not to hang on to the skirts of other people's praise, but to add a worthy share. To be "kings and priests unto God," means that we officiate in God's service reverently, and lovingly—with the *spirit*, and the understanding. To say, like David, "*My* voice shalt Thou hear in the morning," and to act like David also, giving intellect and heart in noble consecration to God's praise. The business of a kingdom, the

cares of state, the temptations of a warrior, the troubles of envious malice, or the sorrows of personal sin, did not extinguish the songs of the sweet singer of Israel; nay, they enflamed them. And are they not even now the mouthpiece of tried hearts, in all the varied experiences of human lives, and striving spirits?

This distinct and personal cultivation of the heart's utterance, would tend in every way to exalt the services of religion. It would inflame zeal, and strengthen holiness. It would tend to repress outside errors of voice and manner. It would make the service more delightful. It would enforce the necessity of preparation for, and cultivation of, praise. And in an artistic sense, it would make the service of praise more musically acceptable. For the *choir* would fill the church, and worship would inspire the choir. It would make the place of worship, a place of the holiest enjoyment, an attraction to the thoughtless; who would find, in such expressive and devotional singing, something better than mere chords, even though surrounded by all the adjuncts of gorgeous music, or glittering ceremonies. In the choice words of Ogilvie, we should say—

> "Let man, by nobler passions sway'd,
> The feeling heart, the judging head,
> In heavenly praise employ;
> Spread His tremendous name around,
> Till heav'n's broad arch rings back the sound,
> The burst of general joy.

Ye fair, by nature form'd to move,
O praise the eternal Source of Love
With youth's enlivening fire.
Let age take up the tuneful lay,
Sigh His blest name, then soar away
And ask an angel's lyre."

THE PRAISE LEADER AND HIS DUTIES.

(As read before the Tonic Sol-fa College, Christmas, 1871.*)*

IT is quite a doubtful question whether the Church has at all adequately considered, either its duties, or its privileges, in the matter of music in its services. It is quite possible to entertain a doubt whether, the main object of meeting together in the place of worship should be, to hear sermons and celebrate sacraments, or whether, by means of solemn prayer and praise, the personal worshipper should be brought into immediate intercourse with the Divine Spirit. At any rate, there are some among us, who dare not look upon the act of what is popularly called Psalmody, as by any means the merely supplementary thing, which usage at least compels us to conclude, that many good people imagine it to be. What is the act of Praise? If it means anything, it is as serious as prayer. Consisting as it does of utterances in Holy song, of professions and adorations of the most personal kind, addressed in person to the Almighty, it must most assuredly be accepted as a personal sacrifice, or be an "offence against high Heaven." It is possible, that love of music, may lead some of us to forget the responsibility of the act, but the startling

truth remains, we are either uttering meaningless words, t
sounds which only touch our sense, or we are as really praisir
God, as if we stood already on the sea of glass, among tl
sacred harpers, ready to dash our "golden crown" before tl
majestic throne, in the very audience chamber of heaven.
cannot get from this serious reflection, and I would urge on s
interested in true worship, to ponder on the solemn impo
thereof.

If it is true that most of our utterances in Praise, are eithe
personal addresses to the Divine Being, personal professions
honour, of love, or of adoration, or else such general stat
ments as are meaningless, without the recognition of the Hol
presence,—what judgment must we pass on the ordinar
services of song as we hear them in various places? I refe
not to levity amongst choristers in cathedral or church, but t
listlessness among congregations. I refer not to forms
worship, but to the absence of the true spiritual expression i
their utterance. I refer not now, to any want of liberality i
providing money or machinery, but to the laxity which fails t
see, that, for the individual heart and lip-utterance of eac
Christian, neither money nor deputy can suffice. From th
preacher to the pew-opener, from the prince to the peasan
from the aged to the young, from all should come the incens
of that personal worship in Sacred Song, the smoke of whic
shall roll as a cloud around the Heavenly Throne. Some suc

grand thing I hold Psalmody to be, and we should bear this in mind in considering the question immediately before us. And first—

THE OFFICE OF THE PRAISE LEADER.

This includes the duties of—

The leading in Public Service.

The preparation for Public services,—and, I think,

Meetings for the cultivation of Praise. I cannot see why *Praise* meetings, should not alternate with Prayer meetings.

It is roughly understood that in some way or other, somebody should be employed to lead the singing of the congregation; and it is not my business now, to discuss the several ways, whether by a choir, an organist, or precentor. There is responsibility resting somewhere, and upon someone, and it is my belief that it should be, a *more distinctly responsible office* than it often appears to be, to lead the praise of the people in Sacred Song. The precentor should not be a mere shouting machine; the organist, a mere grinder of chords; the choir, simply a sub-committee, set apart to do the singing. But is it not unfortunately too true, that a merely good voice often qualifies for a precentorship, and digital nimbleness, for an organist? Does not the duty involve more? Has not the leader of the Praise to do with the hearts, and thoughts, of the

congregated worshippers? to help them to spirit utterance, t educate them to a noble and sincere expression, to give the cu to holy moods of mind, and to suggest the deepest meaning The office of Praise leader, of course, requires technical knowledge, fitting him to select fitting tunes for Hymn or Psalm—t see that the same are taught; to teach and encourage all th people to sing, and to correct errors of all kinds; these are hi most elementary duties. The dignity of his office, is, where h leads the spirits of the people to their true expression; t cultivate taste, feeling, and conscience in all their sacred themes to reprove errors in taste and judgment, and above all t conserve the religious element in worship, subserving the ornamental to the devotional; educating to niceness of execution, as a means of developing nobler worship in praise, and joy in its expression.

But I may be asked, is the office thus recognised in the Church? Alas! it is not. Ministers are heard to class it with the secular arrangements, and hand its interests over to the "petty cash book" of congregations, viz., the offertory for incidental expenses.

The Praise leader is often only looked upon as a useful creature, who, between the musical performances might be expected to act as deputy pew-opener, and though the congregation know too much to sit under his musical instruction, he might be trusted to drag the Charity, or Sunday School children, through some tunes for the service.

I myself, once entered as a candidate for a London precentorship, at a popular place of worship—a place too, where both preacher and people, were supposed to have correct notions as to Praise. Before the service, after selecting the tunes, I was informed that "the leader usually carried the books up into the pulpit for the minister, but that, under the circumstances, the chapel-keeper would do it that day." Sexton and singer in one! Why not clean the minister's shoes; probably that would be an honourable office for the "clerk?" Not so were the arrangements in old Hebrew worship, when one-third of the Levites were trained to sing, and to exercise a priestly office in leading the sacred Psalms! Not so when the Son of Jesse—princely precentor of Israel—headed those singers, with his noble songs, and holy inspirations. These offices were then religious ones; but now, a church which pays £500 per year for its minister, pays its Praise leader £25; and is choicely liberal if £50 is disbursed for an organist, while £1,000 is given for its sermons! I say, no wonder that Praise and its obligations are much depreciated, when it is almost a reproach to receive the pittances which are called salaries, for so serious an office in the place of worship. My conviction is that the position should be made respectable in point of emolument; that its duties should be clearly defined, and reverently exercised. This question is of great importance, affecting, as I believe it does, the religious influence of the

Church; for, the low esteem into which the service of praise has sunk, and the lower place accorded to its leader, has led to all sorts of inconveniences; sometimes embroiling religious communities, and destroying their peace. If the thing is done quite gratuitously (which at present is far the most respectable) there is often a clashing of rival aspirants to the brief authority which accrues, and to the fame the office lends. If it is poorly paid for, then too often doth illiterate ignorance, and superficial knowledge, either in organ-loft or desk, leave the church song, a scorn to the man of taste, a nuisance to the musically susceptible, or else a mere fiction so far as the congregation is concerned. Many of the controversies respecting church music have been the result of schemes, which found their inspiration in this supposed failure of the grandest of all church music—namely, hearty, united service, by all the people. Because the people were badly led, and left untaught, choirs and quartetts, choral celebrations and instrumental performances, have been substituted for the people's worship, in my serious judgment, to the detriment of the people's interest in religion. Even now, there needs a thorough reform, for, though dissatisfaction at these poor substitutes for people's praise is manifesting itself, and the church is beginning to see, that revival of religious fervour, is mostly accompanied by a revival of the people's psalmody, yet the importance and the religious ness of the responsibility, attaching to the management and direction of the praise of the church, is but faintly realised.

THE LEADER.

One of the first steps to this reform, is to secure a fitting praise leader; and it seems to me, that such persons need especial education and preparation, as well as consecration, to the serious duties of this office, which I consider to be, second only in importance to the ministry itself. And if such persons were found, they could be easily supported, *first*—by a *respectable salary* for their services, which should include meetings for preparation and cultivation of the gift of song for the religious exercise, and consequently would much tax their strength and time; and *second*—by private and professional work among the congregation. I protest against this office being considered a merely secular appointment. A man is not selected for the pulpit simply because he has the gifts of language, speech, and fancy; he is first presumed to have seriousness, sincerity, and sacred zeal; and this should be first required of the man, who dares to undertake the guidance of professed worshippers, through holy emotions, trembling confessions, protestations of faith, hope, and love; to lead them like a flock, by the green pastures of praise, into the audience chamber of God.

Let me venture to suggest some qualifications which such a leader should be expected to possess; and first,—whether organist or precentor, he should have a *fair voice*, and a knowledge of the proper use of it. This is necessary for many

purposes, but especially in teaching and patterning to the people; a man may prefer to lead with an instrument, but he cannot teach with it, truly and intelligently. It would be difficult to explain the throat voice on the organ, or to get clear "klang" from the worshippers by machinery. A pattern goes further than talk; show the thing you want, and the people will see and imitate. Thus, points of expression and development of the feelings, will be best taught also.

Second, The leader should be a *teacher*. The capacity to impart knowledge is largely a gift, and this office requires a skilful teacher. There are many men who could compose a Cantata and conduct its performance, who could not easily teach two hundred people how to sing a common hymn, to a common tune. And there are others who are so gifted in the art of communicating instruction who, though they could not compose the psalm-tune, could teach a thousand people how to sing it, with the spirit and the understanding. Thus, we find some men able to teach every scrap they themselves know while others are stored with profound learning, which cannot find an outlet.

This teaching power includes, the *ability to talk* to large numbers, with ease and earnestness, and especially the latter for I maintain, that the true praise leader should not be ashamed to speak of sacred things, or mention sacred names or to incite to sacred reflections, when such exhortations are

necessary to develope the true expression of the heart in worship. He should not forget, that his duties deal with the mind, as well as the voice, the heart, as well as the head.

This teaching power includes *moral force*; power to influence others, courage to correct errors, or to control misdirected zeal; moral force—to inspire zeal, and to secure and maintain, the energy and life of the service. It is, I think, evident, that such a teacher must have a fair education of head and heart, to hold any secure position among most modern congregations.

Second.—The leader should be a *man of taste* and sensibility, —one susceptible to emotional changes, quick in the perception of veiled and subtle thought, and prompt in their development. For he has not only to lead the mere correct sounds, but the dignity of the duty is that he has to lead out the thought and the sensibility, to induce the sense of personal appropriation of the text of the sacred words. Thus giving the throng of worshippers, by his own serious suggestive and intelligent leading, such help as shall make the people's praise, to move like an ocean, responsive to the winds of heaven; now trembling, now dashing, now reposing under the passionate impulses of noble emotions, or, to march like an army in its accents of triumphant praise. "Such singing is a dream," say some; "you could not get it from a trained choir." Quite so, if the trained choir be not susceptible to heart impulses, but it may be got in true worship. Just as strong, burning emotion

makes the ignorant man sublime in eloquence, so will it make the people's worship mightier than mere art, more magnificent than mere performance.

A stolid man, cold and phlegmatic, will never make a good praise leader, though he have a throat of brass, or a voice like a clarion. Such a man is a musical cart horse, often dragging the people through intricate lanes of tune. An emotionless man can never incite to praise, his fingers are icy on the keys, quenching the fire of worship. This same taste is required in the choice of music to words. A true leader would not arrange—

> "Stand up and bless the Lord,
> Ye people of His choice;
> Stand up and bless the Lord your God
> With heart, and soul, and voice:"

to tune St. Bride's, because that tune's "turn had come," or because he was proud of his only minor; or set the beautiful Pastoral, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" to the Grand Chant. Such things have happened once or twice.

Third.—The praise leader should have *enthusiasm about his work.* If so, he will have high aims, anxious most—not to show his own ability, but to get all the people stirred up to the nobleness of this work of sympathetic, sincere, and simultaneous song worship; to the grandeur of it as relates to God,—for what can the angels do more, than sincerely worship?

—to the impotence of aught which is not heart homage, and which must otherwise be a mockery. The praise leader should be an earnest man, realising that his is no secular office, but that the service he leads, has to do with heaven as well as earth. The fire is concentrated which he is called to light in the Temple of worship; the smoke from these spirit-lamps of praise, now moving with grand impulses, high resolves, and ardent emotions, moves in sympathetic waves, guided by him—the chief censer-bearer—whose enthusiastic zeal directs the service of Song. Thus would the "chief musician" lead out Asaph's Song—"Unto Thee, O God, do we give thanks; unto Thee do we give thanks, for that Thy name is near, Thy wondrous works declare."

But I shall be asked,

HOW ARE WE TO GET SUCH LEADERS?

I have had this question put more than once. It is somewhat strange that in this matter there is not the sympathy there should be, between the musician of position, and religious people. This is the more strange, because, as an art, music seems to have more to do with the heart of man, than some others. Probably, the gross errors of taste, and the poor results which have come of people's psalmody, have tended to alienate the "chief musicians" of the present day from sympathy with such service, although the earlier English

composers seemed to have interested themselves in the question. If a modern composer writes a psalm tune, it is a condescension; he turns away from such amateur efforts as people's song with disdain, preferring to write for choirs and orchestras, grand masses and requiems, which few can appreciate, and fewer still perform. I think this is short-sightedness; for the more the people are taught to sing, the more likely the increased demand for more intricate music, to be used, let me suggest, in its proper place, in the concert room or the home, for performance is *not* worship, and all substitutions of the kind must be made, at the expense of the positive interest of the people, in religion and her services. Some steps towards the production of the "right man" have been already hinted at, and with deference I suggest further;—

First.—That *honour be placed on the office.* It should be held as a position of dignity, gravity, and responsibility, not left to be the tacked-on, and irksome duty of an over-worked school-master, who needs a Sunday's rest, and who is often refused the consolation of extra pay withal; neither should it be left to the ambitious and irresponsible amateur, who is quite anxious to play or sing, to the utter destruction of praise and peace—for nothing. But, pay or no pay, the office should be an honourable one, and the man a fitting man.

Second.—The *emolument should be respectable,* so that a gifted man could afford to consecrate time, talent, and thought, to so

important a service. I think praise leaders are rare, and mainly because those who are adequately gifted, shrink from such responsible duties, for what are called salaries for such offices. To me it seems surprising, that a man of some education and deportment, of gift of mind and music, should be expected by church managers, to conduct their three or four services per week, for a dole which a fourth-rate music hall singer would laugh to scorn. Thus comes the temptation to have it done for nothing; thus comes subserviency of the people's song to personal hobbies, and a train of discordant evils. Pay the praise leader, honour and trust him, and expect good work of him. Further, I cannot see why young men of earnest spirit, and proportionate ability, should not be selected while still young, and trained properly for this office. I think that in Scotland there is some such Association for Precentors; I do not see why a "Royal Academy" should be ashamed to make good organists, and praise leaders; but, I believe, that such persons should seriously desire to enter upon the duty as a religious undertaking. It seems to me that a man without religious zeal in such an office, is as much out of place, as a Quaker in a regiment of soldiers. Depend upon it, fervour is a necessity of praise, and should, of course, possess the leader. Dismiss seriousness from the desk or organ-loft, and the worm is in the bud of the people's praise—but, in conclusion, I would encourage those gifted for this office not to disdain the duty because of

the light esteem in which it is too often held. The man of musical gifts and acquirements, can do nothing nobler with them, than consecrate them to the services of religion. To my mind, music seems so mighty, so majestic, so immortal a gift, as to demand an intimate relation to its blessed Giver, to elicit its highest development. Reflect what are the subjects which have incited the composer to his highest, and most imposing achievements! What the themes which have led his soul, to the highest flights where a daring imagination can soar! Why, just those, where the sacred fire of religious thought and deed, have linked on humanity to heaven, and revealed the mysterious links which draw mankind to God. What has Mendelssohn done surpassing his wondrous Sermon in Song on the rugged Prophet Elijah? Mozart than his undying "Requiem?" Haydn than his *Creation?*—or Handel than his *Israel,* and doubly inspired *Messiah?* These, and others, have sharpened their faculties on inferior themes, but devoted them to the exaltation of religion. And these are the praise leaders for all time, as they thus magnificently teach us, how to devote our highest faculties to heaven. When music neglects religion, music will decline, and share the fate of kindred arts. What is modern sculpture compared with the noble forms of the old workers in stone who, though in a dim religious light, yet gave their best thoughts to the gods?—and have we pictures to equal the wonders of art which the old masters produced, under the

inspiration of religious subjects? As art departs from religion, the noblest inspirations leave it. I believe it will be well for music, if she cultivates more intimate relations with religion; and, though we very humble musicians cannot hope to produce grand songs, we may, in devoting lesser gifts to the service of religion, ennoble ourselves by undertaking a duty, which shall bring our work under the direct eye of the Almighty. We should have the highest enjoyment and pleasure in the reflection, that such honour should be placed upon us, as to lead out the hearts of men, with their voices, in most hearty praise and worship.

ON

MEN'S VOICE MUSIC AND MEN'S VOICE CHOIRS.

IT is a curious coincidence in the history of music in our country, that latterly, the extensive cultivation of the art of singing and playing, has been very much confined to the softer sex. And arising out of this, there has come the supposition, that music is a very soft and effeminate study, and is, in fact, only fit for the boudoir or drawing room, where the creatures of superior hardness, may occasionally condescend to listen, rarely to take part, and still more rarely to stand alone; except, perhaps, in the utterance of some unmelodious comic effusion, with most decidedly unfeminine accompaniments.

This charge of the effeminacy of music, and consequently of musicians, has often been made, but how will it bear examination? What need is there that an educated man should be able to say, with a kind of chuckle, of singing, "I never knew a note in all my life," while he would blush to acknowledge ignorance of Latin, Logic, or Literature? What need is there for a man to go through a song or a duet, with somewhat of the ease and grace with which a bear performs a polka? It was a manly thing once, for the fine old English gentleman was a glee

singer! The truth is, boys have been kept from musical studies too much; singing has not been made an indispensable part of their education, as it should. Why, some of the greatest musical geniuses have had to fight their way against paternal prejudice, love of business, and money, in order to stand by the art they were born to cultivate. Music effeminate! Name the great fighting nations, and you name the great musical nations. Germany is not more indomitable in war, than in song; her generals may be great, but her musicians are greater! Beethoven is greater than Moltke! And the brave, impulsive, and heroic Frenchmen, have their huge Choral Societies, only too much excluding the natural union of mixed voices, in their musical performances, and recreations. Again, we may see, enervated nations forgetting their music, like the Turks, who get their exercises of lung and limb, done for them, —and growing nations cultivating the art, and holding the hugest celebrations, like the Americans.

It is a notable fact, also, that the world's greatest music masters are *men*. Men seem alone to be the creators of great musical thought, though women are often the greatest exponents of the same; but we have no queen in music like royal Handel, no peeresses in the art, to rank with Haydn or Mozart. And in England, where are the feminine equals to Balfe, or Bennett, to Wallace or Macfarren? While, therefore, the great song-*creators* are men (and men of the manliest nations),

and, while the art furnishes mental food, and arduous employment for the sturdiest intellect, the most fertile invention, the most delicate sensibility, and the purest enthusiasm, there will be small necessity to rebut the charge, of the effeminacy of music, and only to seek to realise the fact, that it has arisen out of the culpable neglect of the art in school education, and the consequent ignorance of the majority of our men.

MEN'S VOICE MUSIC.

And we may remark first that *there are exigencies when and where the special cultivation of men's music is highly desirable. First*, among our sailors. Why should the repertoire of our tars be restricted to "Black-eyed Susan," "Tom Tough," and perhaps a periodical chorus of "Rule, Britannia"? We long for the time when every boy shall learn in the *humblest school*, so much of intelligent song, as shall enable our seamen to chant their Sabbath services; to sing their part-songs, with dreams of home, of friendship, and of affection, while "Far, far at sea"; and, moreover, to sing them with correctness and taste, as well as with their known zeal and energy. They would fight no worse when fighting time came; and "Rock of Ages" is no bad refrain in a wild hurricane. "Home, Sweet Home" or "Hail, Smiling Morn" would only make more happy their days of calm or sunshine. We find in our sailors, a favourite theme for our own songs, let us aim to make *them singers*, and we shall make them happier and better men, and no worse sailors.

Then, *second*, come our soldiers. It is strange, perhaps, but true, that some of the best singers have been brave fighters. Old Israel's bravest king, was Israel's sweetest singer. The brave spirit which conquered the lion, the bear, and the huge Philistine also sang, on the plains of Palestine, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"—a harp or sword, they came alike to him. The great fighters in Cromwell's army, made a psalm their battle cry. Scotch songs are a history of Scottish bravery, and some of us have been recently impressed, by reading of the German hosts, pealing out grand chorales, in preparation for battle or in honour of victory! The effect of the blazing, wailing "Marseillaise" upon the French, must be wonderful in stimulating patriotic passion, and martial ardour. And have not *we* our brave soldiers now? Are not our volunteers full of pluck and zeal? Do they not drill and march? Yes. And do they not sing? They do, we have heard them, but no classic chorus, no harmony, only an unmelodious shouting of "Johnny comes marching home!"

If our new School Boards should decree, that each child shall learn to sing, as well as to read, write, and reckon, they would do much to soften the hardness of a soldier's life, in field or barracks; much to make the services of religion, attractive and comforting to him; much, which would tend to make him a better man, and no worse soldier. If we will have our thousands of men, whose lives are consecrated to our national

defence, we should not leave those lives unsoftened by civilising influences. And healthy song is one, which, coming like a change of atmosphere to their spirits, would help them to believe that they are our brothers, as well as our defenders, that they might aspire in their leisure, and in their awful life-work, to nobler thoughts than carnage, and purer delights than gory war can give. Such a song as "When earth is hushed to peace" must have a humanising influence upon a soldier's hard life; 'twould make him count his life links, and in thoughts of loved friends, make him sell his life dearly.

Then we have our large places of business, our factories and mines, where men meet by hundreds; and music is adapted to ease life's burden to these hard toilers, to give them cheery accompaniments to machine, to pickaxe, and hammer. A wise manufacturer would not discourage singing classes among his men, nor decent singing in the loom or the forge; 'tis a good antidote to idle or dangerous talk in work time; a counter attraction to the beer-shop and grumbling associates, after work is done. More than all, we believe that if our working men are but once taught, that there is something for them to do (besides listening) in the place of worship, that they may wave *their* censer of praise before the Most High, in public sacred song, that it is equally their duty and privilege, with the greatest, to offer such personal sacrifice,—they will not then neglect the offices of religion, but perform them with pleasure.

If we go upward in the social scale, we shall find, in our colleges and great public schools, where young men of the best families, and of great influence, attend by thousands, that ignorance of the simplest song, is, as a rule, complete. The sight is almost a sad one when they meet in the college chapel, silent, or, if possible, worse, while the praise is being done *for them* by a few surpliced boys, and a few paid singers. Surely this should not satisfy any educated gentleman. The young men are, as a rule, untutored in the most elementary song, utterly ignorant of their own vocal capabilities, unacquainted with the possibilities or the proprieties, of the use of their own voices. Some groan out the melody in lower octave, and believe it to be bass! others strain to do the melody in falsetto, and imagine it to be treble! but the great majority look on, evidently thinking it an absurd idea, that *they* should take personal part. And so they remain, listless spectators of a noble service delegated to paid servants, to which their own consecrated thought, heart, and voice, might be given with honour to the service, and comfort and credit to themselves.

To go no further, we have in our sailors, our soldiers, our huge factories and busy working places; and also in our colleges, a vast and important constituency who need, first, musical instruction. This the Tonic Sol-fa system readily gives; some of us have witnessed successful experimental classes, and rejoice in them. Second, courses of instruction,

with exercises suitable for men's classes. These we may soon expect, as the demand is created. But we shall want more music for the men to use when they have learned how to sing. Thus it would be well to have a psalter arranged for men's voices of ordinary compass, so that sailors in ships, soldiers in chapel, and students in college, might soon have the advantage of an intelligent and agreeable service. Why should there not be a men's voice adaptation of the Church services of any, or every religious communion, as a means of extending the general utterance of praise in such services? The Tonic Sol-fa notation is pre-eminently available for its simplicity, portability, and cheapness, no matter whether in a people's mass in a Roman Catholic Church—our English cathedral service,—or the simplest psalmody of the simplest kirk in Scotland.

Of necessity, because of their neglected education, men are the greatest hindrances to a grand and universal psalmody in England at the present time. The air is natural to women, and, moreover, many of them are taught to sing (a little it may only be) in youth. The same air is often out of the reach of the man, and always unnatural—in a musical sense, at least—when sung at the same time. Consequently, it is a nuisance to sensitive folk, besides being very hard work to the singer. Let us teach the men that they are *intended by the Creator* to sing tenor or bass, just as much as they are intended to wear a beard or whiskers, that is, the *material* is given to them to

make it of. We might also teach them that they have two obligations which should lead them to this cultivation of the special gift. Duty to the Almighty demands personal praise; duty to our neighbour demands decent and proper utterance, so that our worship may not distract his, but that in harmonious and earnest union we may help each other. In this most important of all music (religious worship), man "lives not to himself alone." "Oh! I always make a noise," said an educated man only a few weeks ago, referring to his doings in church. And why make only a noise? The old Psalmist says "make a *joyful* noise," and this must be musical and fit, before it can be glad and joyful.

Then we want some good part songs and choruses, for the men to sing. These should be arranged for two tenors and two basses, and of moderate compass, if we purpose cultivating a national singing movement among our men. Utterly ignoring so-called male altos, which are too rare, if *real*, to be of much use in the account, we must not keep the tenors constantly on the rack of high C^1, or take the basses down to within a step of its lower double octave. The extremest compass for practical purposes should be from high B_b^1 in the tenor, to lower E_1 in the bass, and these should be but sparingly used, for why should we expect in a part-song, what we seldom get in a solo, even when sung by a first-rate soloist? One of the defects noticed in the best French choirs at the competition at Paris,

in 1867, was their discomfiture when carried up to high C^1 and D^1. The poor conductor had to come to the rescue when in such exalted regions, and these high sounds, at the best, were a thin falsetto of a very painful quality—painful equally to listener and performer. Indeed, this very high range of first tenor, would partly account for the decline of English part-singing among our male population, and is it not enough, when the melody is put out of the range of singers, except in the case of very rare gift or acquirement? Another reason why this class of music has declined, is an ignorance of vocal method of the various registers, and their use in producing the sounds required. There is not a doubt but that, without the use of the throat register by our tenors in "male voice choirs," the singing would be such, that distance *might* "lend enchantment" to the sound, but nothing else would. Thanks to modern research, we may now know more of these things, and there are already signs that our students will not be left in ignorance on this important subject.

ON MEN'S VOICE CHOIRS.

The previous remarks naturally lead to the conclusion, that it is desirable that choirs of men's voices should be more extensively cultivated. Indeed, such a result would come from the extensive formation of elementary classes among that part of the community to whom we have specially referred. For

instance, if an officer, fresh from college, on board one of Her Majesty's ships, were so inclined (and music knows no distinction of class, it is as much a leveller as hunger or thirst) he might in spare moments hold a Sol-fa class, or two, among the hundreds of sailors composing the crew, and from this might come a choir named after the ship. Another might make himself beloved among his soldiers, by doing a similar thing, and the choir of a regiment would soon be as popular as the band; perhaps more so, as every man likes his own music best. Surely this would be no ungentlemanly undertaking, even for an officer, and he might put his leisure to a more fashionable, but far less noble use. A patriotic song on the lips of our brave defenders, whether by land or sea, such as "Firmly stand, my native land," would be far better than ribald choruses or egotistical ditties, for men who go with their lives in their hand, to danger and to death. The Sol-fa plan of teaching by pattern is invaluable in instructing men's classes. It is no wonder that the old way of teaching failed; nothing short of a trombone, could pull one hundred and fifty strong men's voices, by leading, through a course of old-fashioned lessons. But, no matter how unwieldy the voices, the great difficulty disappears, when we teach by pattern carefully and faithfully. Men's voice singing might, and should be cultivated to some extent in connection with ordinary classes. It would afford a pleasant relief to the ordinary rehearsing of mixed voices. We make this suggestion

to teachers; if adopted, we could have a grand association of Orpheonists in England surpassing, in magnitude, that of our neighbours across the Channel, besides having our great host of lady singers, whose merits we by no means disparage, in this effort to make the men more worthy to sing with, and to them. We are, indeed, sure they will honour the men more, when they can trust them to run alone in this, as well as in other important affairs. But it is desirable that choirs be formed for the rehearsal, and sometimes performance, of this kind of music. Choirs of well-trained, certificated men's voices, would give variety to our entertainments, improve and chasten our other singing, and, perhaps, remove the known difficulty which we all feel, in getting a good and efficient body of tenor choristers. We may have heard of one or two purely men's voice choirs in London. They are usually called Polyhymnian, but have not lasted long, and why? First, because their music required *male altos*, and these are very few, and often as capricious as Cynthia, though certainly not so pleasant; second, because of the scantiness of the supply of really good and practicable music. Guarding against these things, there is no reason why such institutions should not supplant the "Harmonic meeting" every Saturday evening, or the ridiculous selection of songs with chorus, often heard when men do congregate for the celebration of a feast, or any other social meeting.

England will not be a thoroughly musical nation, until her

men are practical singers. No doubt, the next generation of men will have the advantage of the present in this respect. Special cultivation in this direction must improve our national taste, create new demands for better music and truer art. And, perhaps, we may some day, see a composer of English blood, whose name may be written with Handel's or Beethoven's. But the reformation in our social song will be marked, and far grander the result in our churches, for then we may hope for a choir as large as the congregation, and a service chaste in its utterance, as well as sincere in its expression. For such a day we long; for such a day should every teacher of pure song patiently toil, and nobly aspire, and we may hope that, uniting our efforts in this direction, we, teachers and students may, some of us at least, live to see England as honoured for her pure musical taste, and practical knowledge of refining and elevating art, as she has been for her martial prowess, her world-wide enterprise, or her Christian benevolence. In that day, Mendelssohn and his peers will be the heritage not only of the dainty in art, but find hearty lovers in every English home.

ON

TRUE EXPRESSION IN MUSIC.

VERY varied are the popular interpretations of the phrase "Musical Expression." There was "such expression!" is a very common term, but it often means a different thing to each speaker. Thus, the parlour pianiste, whose performances consist of a series of extraordinary bangs, and elbow gymnastics, producing a mild thunder, contrasted with all but inaudible instrumental mutterings, is congratulated by admirers with the half-whispered comment "what expression!" The great tenor of each county town, or local Harmonic Society, who deals in doleful ditties, and sings them with long-drawn face, and half-closed eyes, with immense sighs, and much languid energy, is applauded to the echo for his "expression." "Oh, Jones is so good at sentimental songs!" And then the solo violinist with dreamy looks, long hair, and waving body, gives, in twenty-five minutes of dreary variations of a popular air, another notion of expression.

Granted that there is some kind of expression in each of these, there is one thing in all, which comes short of "true expression in music;" for, here, at the outset, the performer stands in

front of, and eclipses *his theme:* taking the attention to himself, which should be given to the music. And while man—or mannerism—thus takes the attention of the listener, and of the performer, the perfection of expression can never be obtained. For is it not as true in music as in oratory? The greatest orator will make us forget the speaker. Even while looking upon him, we seem to lose thought of his face, or his voice: he has carried us away by his passion and earnestness, far away into the region where thoughts burn and glow! where we would be doing daring deeds: or diving into deep and wondrous mysteries. So with music, the expression which comes short of this, is flippant, and its effect evanescent. Short of this, we are like the children who dip their feet among the wavelets which break gently upon the summer shore; utterly ignorant of the world of wonder, so full of mystery and might, from which those wavelets come. Music is not only a succession of waves which tremble in the *air;* she loses her great mission unless the magic of her ripplings surge into the *soul,* there to comfort, strengthen, and delight the real man.

To take in sweet sounds, just to please the sense of hearing, is like eating sweet-meats merely to tickle the palate. The mission of music is to feed the mind and spirit; and "true expression" is the digestive function by which it is thus appropriated. Perfect "musical expression" seems made up of two parts, the "true expression" just referred to, which

affects the mental and sympathetic part of our being; and "execution," which employs the merely mechanical and scientific. Mechanical expression gives us accent and rhythm, which gives shape to phrases, and lends outline to musical thought; and this, with the correct *tones*, uttered with fair precision, is as far as some go in the matter of expression. But often the composer does more than this for the performer, when, by labelling the phrases with what are called "marks of expression," he endeavours to think and feel for him; treating him, in fact, as a machine, and presuming to a large extent that he has no intellect or soul! Thus we have "Pianos," "Fortes," and "Explosions," according to modern fashion, enough to take the life out of any real singer; because it tends to check his own thought and feeling. Can this, even if every suggestion is carried out, bring the highest expression? We think not.

Yon Sculptor's gallery will illustrate our meaning. There, day by day, the chisel works, and there grows out of the rough block a beautiful form. The artist has wondrously succeeded in copying nature; till each limb and feature, is moulded to lines of beauty, his rule of art has traced each muscle, and posed the statue in an attitude of perfect grace. But after all it is but a feeble copy of the being planned by the Almighty artist, who made man with a face as an "index to the soul," and a frame so responsive to his will as to enable it

to do, dare, or die; in obedience to the mind's volition. Mechanical expression is like the marble image. True expression is like the living man.

Nor does *execution*, indispensable as it is, assist in any but a subordinate degree, to the highest interpretation of musical thought. This is a dreadfully mechanical age. Now-a-days, people "plough and sow, and reap and mow," with machinery; and not content with riding, seek to walk by similar means. Extreme facility of execution is simply a development of the mechanical in musical art, to an extraordinary extent; and if a performer can only add half an octave to the usual register, and perform at the rate of Metronome 500, he will receive much profit and applause. The singer who can get out a very high sound, make it very loud, and hold it very long, will be sure to find it pay, and will always be encored.

It will be well for us to bear constantly in mind, that we may train our voices, which may be naturally fine, with all the various mechanical resources, until we are very Blondins of vocal facility; we may think with our minds, and grace our phrases with the arts of elocution, but we fall short of the sublimity of the singer's art, while the soul, the seat of sensibility, sympathy, and sincerity, is untouched. Let those of us who teach, be not content with anything short of this. Real music is not a mere succession of sweet sounds, making an idle but pleasant jingle, to amuse the sense, though this is as far as some professors

go, and all that many compositions can pretend to do. Such masses of agreeable sound, are but stony images of music, in which her great soul scorns to dwell, though she will linger lovingly in some simple ballad, or solid psalm.

The cultivation of the gift of expression in music becomes a thing of the utmost importance: as by this means we have to learn, not only how to utter, but how to feel our song; we have not only to bring our voices and brains into it, but our hearts. See how this affects our psalmody! Why are we sometimes more moved by the rough outburst of worship by a congregation, than by a grand performance? Because there is genuine feeling in the utterance, and meaning in the act. In the simple rehearsal of confessions and hopes, of pleadings and praises, the performers are personally interested: and the more this personal sympathy is extended, the more grand, solemn, and impressive, will our church song become. We shall need no marks, no labellings to tell the people how they should feel; but these recitals of religious worship, coming in gushing utterance from earnest spirits, shall now hush with awe at Divine Majesty: grow tender at Almighty pity, and thrill and glow with thankfulness and rapture—and this with no other inspiration, than true hearty expression, coming from reverence and sincerity. The tune is but a censer, the words the sweet herbs; but 'tis the soul which finds the *fire* which makes the incense of praise to blaze, sending up its cloud to heaven; without this the psalmody is either sensual or senseless.

A first caution in the cultivation of "true expression" should be: *Let us not be content with mere verbal expression.* This leads some to give especial emphasis to such words as thunder, fire, joy, or praise—no matter what the context. It, also, leads to a slavish obedience to common signs or rules, which it is the province of the highest art, sometimes to overrule and modify. We should bear in mind, that many of these same signs and directions, are open to differences of opinion, and they cannot be relied upon with certainty. While intense grief can be expressed by extreme loudness or softness; awe by *sf* or *pp;* joy by rapturous shouts, or caressing softness; two minds may decide in different ways, and still be true to nature and science. We should remember that every composition has, or should have, some great idea, thought, or picture; to this great central thought the words are but servants; we should see that these servants do not take away the attention from the master, which is enshrined in the words like a spirit in a body. For what are words, but the mere notation of living thoughts? Every nation of people can think, yet have different words: and the thoughts of men are much alike, and should be capable of true expression.

Next: we should endeavour to find something *real,* in our musical renderings; and when we have found it, we should show *real* interest and sympathy in its proper interpretation.

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But can this kind of expression be applied generally? Why

not? 'Twas this which poured through Handel's fingers, and made his "playing the congregation out" an impossibility. This magic of sympathy, which, kindled to a flame, gave to us the "Hallelujah Chorus," and the tear-laden songs which enrich his masterpiece. And this wonderful magnetism, though brought to bear by great artists, in the utterance of Handel's solos, has yet to be sent thrilling through his choruses; and only when this high spiritual rendering shall unite choristers as well as soloists, band as well as baton, may we expect the noblest performances of our sacred dramas.

Some helps to "true Expression," are,—

First, a study of the central thought in the piece to be sung, thus finding the points, or leading figures in the mental picture. Then we should find the motives, emotions, and desires, which move behind the words, and if the music is in accordance therewith, move among the musical phrases, and chords also. Then we should get a kind of bird's eye view of the whole scene, endeavouring to see something real. This will tend to give point and perfection to the whole picture.

Secondly. We should study the composer, seeking to understand why he uses such musical combinations, such marks of expression, endeavouring *not* to be led away by a too flowing melody, or by clever harmonic effects, from the true interpretation, thinking with him through his subject carefully and studiously. A personal knowledge of the composer, his general

method and genius, is desirable, as an assistance to comprehend his works.

Thirdly; a large acquaintance with men and manners, and a knowledge of the motives and passions which move men's minds, is a necessary part of education in musical expression. Unless we study the natural emotions, and accompany this study with sympathy and some experience, how can we express with propriety their meaning? An artist who desires to paint a landscape does not remain in his city studio; he seeks to get inspiration and familiarity among the green meadows, or the quiet groves; and paints, to the music of rippling brooks and singing birds. This involves the cultivation of the spiritual and sympathetic in our own natures, and should be accompanied by a fervent and earnest spirit.

Fourthly; true expression cannot come from a superficial acquaintance or even a thoughtless familiarity with our music. The general tendency of singers and performers is to act as a kind of musical threshing machines, thus they, after a few performances, simply ask for more music, thinking that with a knowledge of the words and notes the study has ended, instead of which they are then only prepared to *begin*. If we stop at mere vocal proficiency, we can never make artists, we are simply singing machines. 'Tis the same in music as oratory. The fine voice, the grace of action, and verbal fluency make but a speaker. A thrilling orator possesses fire, and sympathy, and

must be such, though he may lack some of the speaker's graces. The rules of elocution, like those of expression, may tell us where to hush, and where to raise the voice, but *pianissimo* is not pathos, and *forte* is not rapture. True expression may use any or each of these for any of its purposes. When mind and heart manipulate our music, we shall sing like seers, and exalt our art to the high mission of purifying and elevating our fellows. This view of our mission, as singers, points obviously to a moral. If so much of mind and heart is to be cultivated in song, and a habit so sympathetic is to be cultivated, should we not take care what we sing? If misused, does not music become a mighty moral debaser? If obscenities and sensualism are allowed to filter through bright chords and melodies, these, by the magic of the power of expression we possess, will degrade our people as much or more than an impure literature or a tainted drama. And we shall be doing no slight service to our nation, if in all our circles we seek not only to cultivate pure song, but proper expression of noble sentiments and exalting aspirations. Our singing would then become less silly and more solid, less sensual and more spiritual. Our sacred classics would be relieved from the reproach of levity, or lack of reverential feeling. Our psalmody would be ablaze with the spirit of devotion and enthusiasm, and music would no longer be enthroned, and reign in the service of the Temple, but become, as all true art should be, the "handmaid of religion," to soothe, exalt, and bless mankind.

ON

MUSIC AS AN ELEMENT IN REFORMATORY TRAINING.

THE wisest and most successful philanthropist will avail himself of any fitting means to forward his benevolent aims. Indeed, nothing, unless positively unholy, should be despised or overlooked which may serve, if only to a small extent, to palliate human wretchedness, or to remedy moral deformity. Judging youthful criminals to be either the victims of unfortunate circumstance, or of innate moral badness, we yet pity them, as the spiritually diseased or maimed, and would seek to help them; and in doing this, we ask, have we given to music its opportunity, whereby, as a *medicine* it may help to accomplish moral restoration in fallen youth? In advocating such a use of music, we remark first that,—*music is not detrimental or merely ornamental.*

It is too true that some people are so matter-of fact that, because music will not patch a boot or saw a plank, they would exclude it from school altogether. Is not this a mistake?

Will not the lad who sings while he patches, and sings something healthful, *work* the better? We think so; and not only so, his song will keep his thoughts from straying into old bad ways, and if we teach him to sing proper music, will move his mind to newer and purer paths. To the young, music is more or less a necessity, *they will sing something*, and the true moral reformer will seek to discourage the immoral song, and the consequent degradation of the musical faculty, by seeking to put a "new song" into the mouths of those whose reformation he desires to see. The love of music is in fact a kind of moral gauge. Watch the shy and sheepish way in which the hardened and callous will often approach your first overtures to decent song! And as you touch sense and memory, note its humanising effect! The poor soul who has drifted away from the love of singing, or lost the sense of pleasure in hearing music, is a moral outcast, far, far, down the deep of utter debasement, and all but beyond the gentle touch of Christian charity.

We next observe that, *music is not a mere luxury*. Singing is a necessity. God has given the faculty, and the voice, what for? neither to be trained out of proportion, nor to be suffered to die away like a neglected limb! not to be misused or prostituted to impure purposes, but to be *used*. Music is no mere ornament, those who think it is can seldom understand why we are bothered with such a faculty, when money is to be made or a living to be got; but these same good people

cannot see the use of the flowers which bloom in our gardens or deck our hedgerows. Fix upon any one earthly pursuit, which, viewed in the light of our Christian faith, gives us so much of future promise as this! In God's great home, by-and-by, where gathered spirits shall dwell in the Eternal presence, and where pleasures shall be as spotless as the souls that taste them, we are *not* told that the geologist shall use his hammer, the astronomer his lens, or the workman his axe; but we are told that the glowing crowd of the ransomed, while bending in the presence of the King of kings, will sing!

We next remark that *music is a healthful and recreative part of education.* We presume that there are but few who would leave out of the process by which they seek to reclaim fallen youth, a little amusement and play, and as a recreation music is of great value. What is the drill or the march without the band? and it makes the *exercise* doubly valuable by making it cheerful, and thus more healthful. As an indoor amusement, there should be the cheerful song or chorus, and the social hymn; and if, as it unhappily may be, the objects of our pity do not like this it is their misfortune, but as it is only natural and right that they should like it, so the anxious teacher will insist on its accomplishment, until the poor youth sits clothed and in his right mind again. Because ignorant boys dislike the toil of learning to read, does the wise teacher yield to them? Because they hate water and soap must they not wash? We

insist on these things, and so with music; some day the pupil will bless the firmness and wisdom which gave him such a means of gaining profit and pleasure. It seems a strange thing that the divine gift of song should be so neglected in common education, and we hope that soon, from our highest schools, down to the humblest refuge, the humanising sounds of music may have scope to increase, as it may, the catalogue of useful pleasures.

Physically, *singing is healthful.* Judicious use of the vocal organs tends to strengthen the lungs and chest. Many will realise the desirability of any means to this end, when they remember the stooping shoulders, the contracted chests, and the hoarse voices of many of the children in our reformatories and refuges, whose physical inheritance seems only weakness and pain. A careful training in singing is allowed to be very valuable in this respect. And is it not in accordance with the great law of physical being? The unused or misused limb will decline, the neglected intellect grow feeble, the untouched sensibilities become senseless. And the very opposite of all this; the smith's hammer, strengthens his sinews, the thinker is more able to think, and the tender nature is more easily touched. So the unused voice grows weak, the misused lungs decay, and the untrained muscles of the chest, when only tortured by racking yells, cease to perform their important functions healthfully, and thus predispose to disease and death.

The mere gymnastics of singing or vocal drill, should be much valued as a means of health, in all our homes.

A fourth point is, that *music is a help to memory.* We wish to teach a child a life-lesson; to this end, we write it in verse, and this helps us; but we want it never to be forgotten, we therefore associate it with some cheerful chorus, or sweet melody, and thus, we *string the truths* like pearls, and as a necklace they hang about the memory, and will perhaps, bring forth fruit, when the remembrance of the teacher's face and care has faded, and in scenes where warning and solace are of the utmost importance. The wanderer does not need a reminder when he hears the strains of "Home, Sweet Home!" See how he dashes away the tears, as he bounds forward to reach his social haven! And the song that "Mother used to Sing," or which that other dear one used to ask for so constantly!—that simple tune which so often closed the eyes of childhood, is it forgotten? Nay, how often has it been as a cable to hold us to the anchor of hope! or to link us to a better life! So may the true reformer embalm his memory and his counsels in the minds of his pupils by means of music.

But, *music is a comforter.* True, the lines of care are not limned on these poor children's faces, because, though debased, age has not brought full responsibility: but dark shadows, which come of neglect and sin, have settled there, and we should be thankful if by any means, we can lift from their

faces this dreary pall, and bring back cheery looks and peaceful smiles. Something like what they should have had, if blessed as our own children are. Cheerful singing helps to this, not only now, but by-and-by, when they are honest toilers, with honest homes, and when honest cares and heart-aches come. The fire-side song in a lowly home may tend to strengthen good resolutions, drive away evil suggestions, cherish hopes of better things, and perhaps keep in a flame the blessing of a practical religion.

Again, *music is not unmanly.* One might suppose so from the habit of our English education, which, even among the highest classes of society, confines singing, as a study, to the "young ladies." We think this an utter mistake. To the three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic, should be added *really* good singing. We say that music is a manly thing, and the world's heroes prove it! And the highest of all possible sanction is gathered from the groves of Olivet, and the upper roóm, when the divine founder of our religion, even when establishing the most tender of religious rites; with his disciples, *sang a hymn.*

Music is a civilising agent. Evidence that she "hath charms to soothe the savage breast" can be readily obtained. Addison says, "Music is the only sensual gratification which mankind may indulge in without injury to their moral and religious feelings." Luther says, "I pronounce it openly that

after theology there is nothing like music, this only gives peaceful minds and gladsome hearts." Dr. Kopt, the manager of a large reformatory in Germany, says, "The Bible, and the singing of religious hymns, are among the most efficient instruments for softening the hardened heart." Is it not a noteworthy thing, that the most sunken and degraded of heathen tribes have but little love of sweet sounds, and no conception of musical art, while the Anglo-Saxon, the French, the Italian, the German (the world's dominant races), all possess the earnest love of music and a national song.

We next remark that *the cultivation of the gift of song is a duty.* To us who accept the ordinance of divine worship, there is a part of the service in which it is our duty, and should be our delight to engage, viz., in singing the praise of Almighty God. And we argue that our commonest educational schemes are not complete, unless they help to this as well as other ends. And yet how is this neglected! surely we must all admit, who believe in man's immortality, that the duties which affect our souls, are superior to those which have to do with our bodies only. But this duty of sacred song and public praise, is one which will bring the most ample return to both mind and body, and help us to get in tune for the magnificent psalmody of the future paradise.

The means to the end. Never was there less excuse than now for those who neglect music, whether in congregations, schools,

homes, refuges, or reformatories. Musical education is cheap, printing is cheap, teachers are plentiful, and systems are in open competition and only ask a practical test. We do not wish to depreciate the value of other methods, but to all who have not become acquainted with the popular system of Mr. Curwen's (*i.e.*, the Tonic Sol-fa system), we earnestly commend it as just the "very thing" by which to accomplish the inexpensive musical culture of the poor pitiful objects of reformatory care. And why? Briefly,—It has brought the study of music down to the very smallest capacity, offering a notation founded on the letters of the alphabet. It is scientific in its principles, and complete in its details. It is easy, avoiding technicalities, and speaking in plain English as much as possible. It is *cheap*, as well as easy and true, and as a system and notation, is in itself all that is necessary for the enjoyment of music, its use, and acquirement. But more than this, it has its disciples nearly everywhere, who will be found ready, when solicited, to help in this direction those who may desire such help. Beside all this, it is the safest and truest plan by which to learn and use the old notation. Having tested the capacity of the method in schools, in churches, in classes, and in homes and reformatories, having ever found it most useful, we very earnestly commend it to all as a valuable ally in their onerous and responsible work. But our object is not to puff a system; by some means,

by all means, teach the poor children to sing! you know not how useful it may be to them. Teach the poor youth to sing! The Germans have a proverb that "Where music is not the devil comes," and we know not what help we may be giving to otherwise "idle hands." Let the girls have a pure lullaby and the boys a healthy song, and after generations of the saved may bless this influence.

It is too true that music, like everything else, may be, and is, demoralised and degraded by desecration to brutish uses, but it is none the less a heaven-sent gift, and is intended as a merciful alleviation from care, and a means of pure enjoyment. As such it has especial claims upon those whose noble ambition is to assuage human sorrow, or to raise sunken humanity. By its means, many a golden truth may be repeated and remembered, many a trembling faith strengthened, many a callous nature touched, and perhaps, who knows, many a noble soul saved from shipwreck, and helped across life's stormy sea by the bright ray of truth, when it bursts from the torch of sacred song, as lit by the hands of Christian pity.

PART II.

MISS SONATA SILVERTONE: SOLOIST.

WE are fast becoming a nation of solo-singers. To be a mere chorister is next to nothing; we have solos in the street, and solos in the sanctuary; songs in the nursery, the parlour, the workshop,—and we may be astonished,—but we have had singing preachers and teachers. So horribly clever do we threaten to become in this line, that it will soon require no small amount of intrepidity, to say nothing of talent, for a professional singer to face the public. Critics are so plentiful, and style, feeling, and finish, are of so much less moment than cool courage,—to use a mild term,—comical colouring, or clap-trap contrivances of voice or manner.

Some of this comes of quack "professors" who promise to make a solo-singer in a few weeks, and some, of total ignorance.

A "little knowledge," too, has its risks here, and a want of adequate apprehension of the greatness of the singer's art, all tend to make solo-singing as feeble in its influence as it is common in its growing prevalence. Our aim is that Miss Sonata's history may illustrate a few points of this sort, and in doing this we have tried to be quite as useful as comical.

"Miss Sonata Silvertone: Soloist."

It was printed so beautifully on a delicate little card, embossed and scented! It was enclosed in tiny envelopes, with fancy border and strange musical device,—it was posted to the clergy, gentry, and all the great people in the parish! Then, with visions of engagements many; of fees enormous; of applause triumphant; of bouquets, bravos, and bewildering compliments, Miss Sonata Silvertone sat down and waited for the first application for her valuable services.

Miss Sonata had had no public opportunity of distinguishing herself up to the present time. And she had arrived at this stage in her history somewhat as follows:

Her parents were what is called "well-to-do," which fact, before they were blessed with a daughter, simply meant that they had nothing to do, but, when Miss Silvertone "came to pass," they were much occupied with plans which tended to make her as vain as possible.

Her very first tooth was said to have been "cut" very much more cleverly, than any other young lady's for miles round, and her very first word was thought to have been uttered with a supernatural regard for final consonants, while her *first song!* —which angelic outburst occurred while she was in her eighteenth month—was considered final as to what nature intended her to be.

With a seer-like forethought on the part of her papa, she was named "Sonata;" not a very Christian name, but one eminently suggestive of her future, and her whole education was made to tend in this one artistic direction. Thus, she was not troubled with arithmetic, lest her sufferings should be multiplied, her geography was limited to a dim conception that Great Britain was an island, and that Brighton—where she occasionally resorted—was the principal part of the outward edge of it. Then she was seldom allowed to read, lest she should "spoil her voice" if she did it aloud, or "muddle her head" if she read to herself. Thus, with a little of the pianoforte, and a slight outward application of Italian and French, she received her preliminary education.

SONATA'S FIRST LESSON.

He came! Signor Sforzando—from whence, why no one exactly knew, but somewhere from the West End of London, and before that (supposed) from Italy. He was a "Professor,"

had it printed on his card, and if he had a door, most likely it was emblazoned there. And he only charged a guinea a lesson! How beautifully Sonata trembled when she first saw him, with his dark eyes, his long hair, and broken English! (Her father wouldn't have looked at a teacher who could have spoken plainly, or who wasn't a "professor.")

And how he stretched himself over the keys of the pianoforte, and wonderfully agitated its interior! So much so, that when he called her "mine chile," and asked her to sing "dat note," she could scarcely open her mouth, her eyes were so distended with surprise and awe. But after a while she sounded the long-asked-for "Ah," which she did again and again, during which operation the "Professor" looked mysteriously at each point of the compass, at the floor and wall, and when he had kept up this process for some time, he bounced up, saying, "Beautiful organ!" pocketed his fee, and departed. These magic words "beautiful organ," when reported to papa, nearly extinguished him with rapture. Slapping his knee, he exclaimed, "He's the man for the business."

For many weeks this process—profitable to one of the parties at least—continued; varied only by occasional interrogations from the anxious parent as to her progress. "Well, my pet," he would say, "what can you sing?" To which she would reply, "Why, only *Ah!* pa dear, yet." To which "pa dear" would doubtfully respond, "Oh, ah! yes, of course!" But

too much of this did not suit Mr. S. Like a good many other folk, he expected that pupils in music should begin to perform at once, and learn *how to do it* afterwards. So he compelled the reluctant Professor to get up a song, which, after a good deal more of his mysterious and ejaculatory drill, he did. For a month or two, a song—it was something about the "beating of my own heart"—was studied, a few notes at a time—the Professor very cleverly trying to make her sing as many high notes as possible; as much of it as by any effort could be got to one breath; to make her "open her mouth vide, so marsh!" in fact, so much that it was no small operation to get it closed again; and he crowned all this by such a careful attention to her "*pronunciationé*" (as he called it) that she gave each word with as enormous a foreign accent as could be brought to the lips of an English maiden. Who shall tell how all this delighted the Professor? Then the expression, what care he took! Though he did not understand the sentiment of the song, and could not define what he wanted, or the song demanded, yet he carefully inculcated the *feeling*, by clasping his hands, rolling his eyes, and shaking his hair, which hung behind his head like an exploded chignon. Indeed, Mrs. Silvertone was one day nearly startled into hysterics when coming upon the Professor, while he was teaching the proper expression of a *beating heart;* and only gave up the idea of sending for her medical gentleman, upon being pleasantly assured, in such charming language, that it

was the "soul of de music which did make him feel to fly to de stars, and what you call explode him, wid de *expressioné.*"

Mrs. S. dubiously enquired of Mr. S. that same evening, if he thought that kind of expression was desirable, and whether musical explosions of the kind to which the Professor was subject, might not injure Sonata's health. To which he sagely replied, "You leave that to him, my dear," a reply quite in accordance with the said Professor's views.

THE MUSICAL SOIREE.

Parental pride, to say nothing of professional instinct, or childish ambition, now demanded that Sonata should be "brought out," and if not made a "star" at once, at least to be brought out *a little way.* For what is the aim of a good deal of solo-singing, pianoforte playing, and French talking? Why, to get knowledge, intellectual delight, and spirit culture, of course! *Nay,* innocent friend, those who sing for the love of it and the good it does, are very few. Why do songs sell at Christmas time? Because there will be parties to sing to, opportunities to be, like Sonata, now, a "little brought out." But it was decided that Sonata's first song, should be celebrated by a *Soirée Musicale,* and all was excitement as the time drew near. All the local talent were invited, and the evening came. The first to present himself was Mr. Pullstops, the church

organist, then Mr. Monotone, of the parish choir, great at recitative, Miss Cavatina Coax, the local *prima donna*, Mr. Singlesong (baritone), who was always ready with the "Village Blacksmith," while Miss Arpeggio, the parish pianiste, mustered in force sufficient to overawe the bravest "Broadwood" ever made. These, with some amateurs, the family doctor, and a strong muster of relatives and friends, awaited the dawn of the Professor, who soon appeared in what was his full evening dress, which seemed to mean a very seedy dress coat, through the sleeves of which his hands—dressed in baggy white kids—looked as though they never could have come through, and did not want to go back again. But seediness, and carelessness, and often griminess, are distinguishing signs of great professors, and when he appeared with his pupil on his arm, all was excitement and expectation.

But we must not dwell too much on the delights of this social, yet musical festival, as such things are very familiar. We can all understand that, as usual, most of the *singers* came to hear *themselves* sing, and *non-singers* to hear themselves *talk*. Such is life at most parties, and such was life at this. While Mr. Pullstops took the edge off the audience by performing Handel's "Occasional Overture" on the harmonium,—which he justified by most decidedly affirming that this *was* an occasion,—such conversation took place as was possible under the circumstances. But when he suddenly let go the keys,

such a Babel of talk was discovered, that it frightened the gentle contributors. We will not stay to tell, how Mr. Monotone thundered out the recitatives from the *Creation* with a prolonged growl at the end of each sentence, and with all his words melted down, by the power of his articulation, into one; or how Miss Cavatina Coax declared, with face in horizontal position, and eyes rolling, that "she could not sing the old songs," which gentle fib she was then rehearsing for about the one hundred and fiftieth time that year. Then how Miss Arpeggio advertised for pupils with some energetic variations of her own, on the "Moonlight Sonata" of Beethoven's! the "Village Blacksmith" of Mr. Singlesong, which, of course, was *inevitable;* how he would play his own accompaniment *à la Weiss!* only with his nose nearly rubbing the silk in front of the instrument, and his face never turned to the listeners, which perhaps was a mercy, for it was frightfully distorted; all this and more occurred, giving the utmost pleasure to those *personally* concerned in the several performances.

But curiosity made all listen when Miss Sonata was led to the piano, the Professor accompanying on this occasion; which he did, however, with such vigour aud action, evidently intended to inspire his pupil, that, with the exception of a few high notes, of which the professor was so proud, nothing was heard of the singer. But the triumph was the more complete on this account, that every one applauded, as they were bound to

do, in fact, as they were expected to do. And, though nobody knew exactly what for, everybody congratulated and smiled, until the happy father was quite overcome by a sense of his responsibility, as parent of so wonderful and gifted a child.

As a natural consequence of so much admiration, both Sonata and her papa were expecting daily that the Professor would fulfil his promise of "bringing out" the fair singer before the public, for it was by talk of "influential connection" and "concerts" that Mr. Silvertone was persuaded to continue feeing the Professor. But now it got very urgent, and as papa had expended a large sum, he, like a true Briton, wanted to see some returns. Upon very plainly putting this to the Professor (who, alas! had only one or two other pupils, whom he taught at much less than a guinea a lesson, and had no chance of fulfilling his delusive word), Mr. S. in a true British rage suddenly dismissed him with a bang!

And thus, on the strength of this musical education, we find Miss Sonata Silvertone, Soloist, awaiting anxiously the first application for her valuable services.

In a day or two, she received a letter. How she fluttered as she opened it, but it was only an invitation from her friend, the clergyman, to sing principal soprano in a charity performance of an Oratorio. However, she undertook it with pleasure, not thinking that she had never sung an Oratorio solo in her life. Then came a request that she would kindly sing for

a ragged school. Then, would she oblige the Committee of the Young Men's Literary Institute; with a few more such liberal engagements, and offers to hear her for nothing. Poor Sonata felt snubbed, and soliloquised as follows:—"What funny notions people seem to have, they seem to expect musicians to be always ready to expend their strength for nought. Do tailors, and bakers, and carpenters, do the same thing? At any rate, poor singers and players should be gifted with the bump of benevolence as well as of song." And Sonata's face only relaxed into good looks again when she remembered that, luckily for her, singing was not a necessity, or in other words, that she, unlike "little Tom Tucker," was not compelled to sing "before eating her supper," or the probability seemed that there would be small chance of better fare than "cold bread and butter."

Thus she cogitated as she put on ten postage stamps which conveyed decided "Nos" to all but one of as many applications for her free services. But by one of these she was committed to sing the solos in the *Creation*, so without further ado she posted her letters, and that evening went down to a full rehearsal of the oratorio with the most perfect innocence, expecting, by the magic of her late instructor's voice lessons, to be able to do the thing right off.

However, when she saw the crowd of choristers, and instruments, and had greeted Mr. Pullstops, who was to conduct the

first performance (his first effort in that line), she began to feel decidedly uneasy, and while the "representation of chaos" was being decidedly misrepresented by the band, it occurred to her, in looking at one or two of the solos, that they seemed to require quite as much singing as the "Beating of my own heart." She began to wonder how she was to get her notes (the Professor never taught her to read music, and she knew of but one key, which she called the *open key*, and by an effort could tell a quaver from a crotchet). So frightened did she become that, when the tenor began to sing "Now vanish," she seemed inclined to take the hint, and gave an involuntary start to go. Oh, horror! was this premonitory? All this time the lookers-on were enraptured with her blushing and interestingly conscious aspect, little dreaming what a "representation of chaos" was going on within her. True, some of the choristers who *could* read at sight, and couldn't forget it, were evidently looking as though *they* should have been asked to have done the thing. At last her song came—"The Marvellous Work." "A pretty piece of work I shall make of it," she muttered to herself, as she arose with melancholy desperation. But little miracles occur at rehearsals, and full rehearsals are never expected to be satisfactory. Besides, as Mr. Pullstops scarcely knew what he was doing himself, he hadn't the remotest notion of what the soloist and chorus were about. He was so busy rehearsing *his own business*, and the few people

who followed the music supposed, as is usual with young professionals, she was *giving herself airs*, and disdained to sing at a rehearsal. Poor Sonata *was* giving herself *airs*, but they were simply little vocal variations on Haydn's solo. But what most astonished her at the end of this performance was, that the conductor came to her and said that it really was not worth while to detain her, he would have the accompaniments all right. Miss Sonata jumped at the offer, and out of a dilemma at the same time. She retired, much to the delight of some of the choristers, who summarily executed the rest of the solos for rehearsal to their own intense satisfaction.

The "fix" of this rehearsal was an *enlightening fact* to Miss Sonata. She had realised that she knew nothing of music. But she had heard of singers who never did learn the notes, why should she bother about them? If she learned the "tunes" of the *Creation*, she would be all right. So up to the time of the concert she practised daily with Miss Arpeggio, who soon thumped the notes into the quick ear of the vocalist, who having these, soon rejoiced in being, as she believed, quite prepared for the concert.

THE CONCERT.

When the day of the concert came, Miss Sonata was in a state of much excitement. She had been very careful to save her strength for the occasion; to this end, she had carefully

abstained for two days previously from uttering a note, and fancying she had a slight cold, the whole of the *previous* day she had spent carefully tucked up in bed! Her good mother was all anxiety, which she manifested by a constant stream of questions, and requests to fit on a splendid new dress, which was to adorn her offspring. She, moreover, avowed her intention of accompanying her daughter on to the orchestra, and, notwithstanding the protests of her child, papa was sent as fugleman into the reserved seats to applaud everything she did.

All went off as arranged, so far as this. Miss Sonata was arrayed in white silk, and laced so tightly, that her neck, which was very much exhibited, showed up very red, and every breath she took caused a creaking in the other mysteries of her apparel, which made her start as she stepped on to the platform, notwithstanding the applause, which was duly conducted by papa, with all the enthusiasm of parental ardour. But the effect of this fine reception was slightly marred by the appearance of "Mamma Silvertone," who, arrayed in her full-dress cap, with a half-peeled orange in one hand, and a huge fan in the other, did the "attendant fairy" for the fair vocalist. The well-intentioned matron was nothing daunted by the slight titter at her first appearance. She coolly deposited herself in the seat of the tenor soloist, and awaited, with a fair amount of calmness, the anticipated triumph of her daughter, now and then looking round with pride at her child, or nodding obliquely at her

spouse in the front seats. Soon Mr. Pullstops appeared, and with a huge white baton, heavy enough to try the strength of an athlete, began the introduction. It was certainly chaotic enough, perhaps more so than Haydn would have wished, but one incident gave the performance an interest which it might not otherwise have had, when, in the last few *pp* chords, Sonata's dress gave a mighty crack, and an unfortunate "hook" flew into the leader's "eye," making him to introduce a "forestroke unprepared," Mrs. S. at the same time audibly exclaiming "Oh dear! it's bursted." Though this made Mr. Monotone's "In the beginning" rather more emphatic than usual, he well maintained his reputation for dreariness and well-distributed emphasis. And the tenor too, who was decidedly cross at having Mr. Silvertone between himself and the *prima donna*, showed his aptitude by using the *portamento* so constantly, that his singing was a series of bridges from beginning to end. And in order to show that he knew where to take breath, took each inspiration in such fashion that his shoulders went up and down visibly, he blowing like a seal.

But how did Sonata feel when her turn came? Why, how should she feel after so much applause and evident expectation? However, after making one small false start with the Oboe in the "Marvellous Work" (which she ingeniously turned into a cough), she started, and gave immense emphasis to each phrase, very impartially pronouncing each sound with the same force,

and exhausting herself in the effort to overtop the band and chorus. This she succeeded in doing, and of course was loudly applauded, her voice being a good one, and her confidence at present unimpaired. But she was very glad, nevertheless, of the next intervening bass solo, which gave her time to recover breath again. This rest Mr. Monotone seemed to make almost endless, and Sonata being very anxious to complete her triumphs, started up with much readiness, to perform her first recitative. But what was her surprise to hear what seemed an extraordinary vagary on the part of the principal violoncello, who seemed to agitate all his strings, first one at a time with great deliberation, and next all at once with great vigour. Poor Miss S., never dreaming that this was all the accompaniment she was to get, turned round and stared at him in amazement, which he perceiving, nodded cheerfully, and obligingly repeated his performance. This awkward moment was made more intense by Mrs. S., who, thinking her daughter was being trifled with by the "bass fiddler," nodded and scowled at him violently, emitting at the same time such a "hush" as frightened the poor 'cello player, and tickled the fancy of the whole orchestra. But luckily the leader, an experienced musician, engaged for the occasion, seeing the real state of the case, sounded her starting note, and off she went, Mrs. S. nodding triumphantly at each phrase, as much as to say, "Who said she couldn't do it." But this episode had much impaired her principal main-

stay, viz., her confidence, and Sonata was now decidedly flurried. Her heart began to beat, and once it required all her powers of self-control to keep down the tears, especially when at the end of the recitative, and between it and the solo, her mamma thoughtfully offered her the peeled orange! But putting it aside, she started off with "Verdure Clad," and certainly if *greenness* would have assisted her in the interpretation, she was verdant enough. Already she saw a grave look stealing over the clergyman's face, and unkind titters from behind made her feel less certain than ever; but in the midst of it all came the consciousness that she did not understand her task; and this led to a climax, when she saw the faces of her friends covered with their hands, as she mispronounced her words, misplaced the accent, displaced her h's, and shouted remorselessly the tender and graceful phrases of Haydn's song. When the syncopations came, she got out of *time*, and finally in the beautiful modulations got out of *tune;* and when some cruel and vulgar fellow expressed his manly sense of appreciation by hissing, Sonata fairly broke down in tears, hysterics, and shame,—ended her first engagement in the arms of her mamma, and was carried away amid much confusion, leaving the rest of the performance to one of the ambitious lady choristers before mentioned, who, by dint of imitation (having heard the music sung by real artists), and by ignorant conceit, finished the affair most satisfactorily to herself.

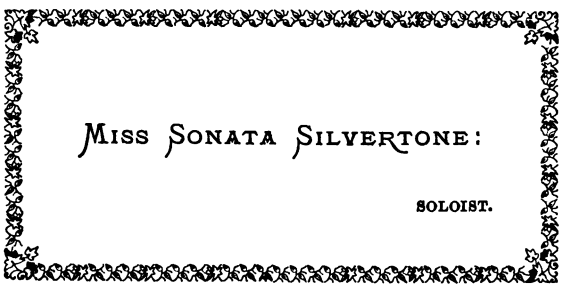
THE RESULT.

This failure was mainly unfortunate because it entailed serious illness on poor Sonata, but the family physician, who was called in, being a man of taste and tact, soon perceived the real state of the case. So he very gently and kindly cultivated her confidence, found her full of talent and taste, but empty of experience or musical knowledge. And when she recovered, he got her parents to allow him to send her a real musical instructress, and Sonata began to learn *music*. She soon saw beauty in the science; then she had a few instructions in singing, and wonderful thing! each lesson seemed to make her more timid and careful. She blushed as she remembered the outraged sentences, unfeeling utterances, and flagrant blunders of which even her old "Professor" was ignorant. She then went to some choice performances; each visit seemed to give her a gleam of new light, but increased humility.

She now began to see that it wanted more than *voice*, however fine, to make a singer, more than "compass" to make a decent executant, more than intelligence to interpret any worthy song. She soon saw that the soul must be engaged in the song to make it live; that thought and fervour must inflame the silver chords of sound to make them touch the springs of emotion, in singer or hearer.

With this new and nobler view of song, came new motives and new aspirations. Till now she had seen in music only a

bright and beautiful garment, in which words might be clothed. She now began to see her as a mighty world of wonders and delights, subject to eternal laws and endless variety, a spirit world full of beauties and mysteries, and we must leave her with the prophecy, that some day the hope of the ambitious announcement made on her little card may be fully realised, and that we may yet hear of



MR. VINCENT VIVACIOUS ON TONIC SOL-FA.

[*Lest there should be doubt as to the probability of this sketch in some particulars, it is well to note, that many of the most seemingly improbable, or over-drawn defects of Mr. Vivacious are such as could be most readily corroborated. That all the main points of his experience, as here narrated, could be illustrated from public print, or from observation, I am assured; and I trust that this short history, may be of higher service than merely to occasion a passing laugh, or a few moments' amusement.—J. P.*]

THE SCENE OF HIS LABOURS.

THE people of the township of Downatone—an antique little town, or large village, not far from Torkey—were not, according to the light of the present reforming age, particularly advanced in music, and especially in congregational singing. There was the parish church, at which the service of praise was duly performed by the school children—recipients of municipal benevolence—who thus paid in "notes" for their keep; these were assisted by various local instrumental celebrities,

including a flute or two, played by the schoolmaster and his assistants, a violin industriously scraped by the village barber, a serpent most determinedly blown by the "village blacksmith," and a double-bass operated upon with much skill by the village surgeon, when not called to more risky, but not more torturing cases. Add to these a bugle, and an organ, to go with or without a handle, and you have a picture of as grand a psalmody as can be produced by machinery, and which, to use the Vicar's words, was "at once a source of pride and comfort to him"—he was fortunately very deaf—"in his ministrations."

Then there were several chapels in the place, where, despising the use of meaner instruments, and rejoicing in the magnificent utterance of a great authority, viz., "that the devil should not have all the best tunes," they chose all the most diabolical airs with the most satanical twirls, twists, and twangs, and uttering them with a physical energy worthy of a worser cause, quite rivalled the congregational singing in the parish church, for its spirit of devotion, decorum, and that sacred expression which should find utterance in the immediate appeals to the Deity in His temple.

THE LECTURER'S ADVENT.

Mr. Vincent Vivacious emigrated to this same township of Downatone, and, to the surprise of the aborigines, deplored the

condition of musical affairs, and worthily determined to do something to alter it. And when he forcibly said that "he would give Downatone a leg-up in the matter o' singing," we shall at once realise that Mr. Vincent Vivacious was a lively Tonic Sol-fa philanthropist, fresh from London, and eager for the fray. Mr. Vivacious, while full of the most musically benevolent intentions towards his benighted fellow-creatures, was not insensible either to applause or honours. His boast was that he was a "self-educated man," which meant that he had done nearly everything for himself, and, therefore, as he curtly put it, "no thanks to nobody." He was, moreover, profoundly impressed with the notion that he had done for himself far better than schools or colleges could have done for him. If he joined a club or a class, it was always more to give good than to get it. So he took his musical certificates, not because they proved that he had learned something, but in order that he might give certificates himself, put "T. C." after his name, and, in fact, become one of those teachers of whom he boasted in the spirit of this self-righteous self-manufacture, that "they was perfectly independent."

Mr. Vincent Vivacious surveyed Downatone with the humid eye of musical pity! "'*Veni, vidi,*' and I am going to '*vici*,'" said Vivacious, despising grammatical correctness in his zeal. "I'll teach all the schools and all the people in no time!" he exclaimed. "Old notationers, indeed! what can they do? Now, let me see, how shall I begin? No half-measures, Vincent,

you know! Shall it be a concert, or a lecture? A concert it can't be, for I can't sing the four parts in chorus; don't I wish I could! so it must be a lecture; no matter if I haven't lectured before, I've often spoke at meetin's!" So as soon as he had done his work (Vincent was in the government service, as postman, and thus felt himself to be quite a man of letters) he started off to the house of the Rev. Vicar, whom he had determined to secure as an ally in his new enterprise. "Ah!" he said to himself as he knocked at the vicarage door, "a lecture's the thing! I'll hold the looking-glass up to the naturals, as Shakespeare says." He was admitted, and introduced himself with much freedom, and the subject with surpassing tact by informing the Vicar that "the singing in the church on a Sunday was a caution!" This seemed to delight the Vicar, who, supposing that admiration must be intended by such a phrase, and, being very deaf, nodded his assent quite cheerfully; and when Vincent, in crescendo tones, exclaimed, "The chapel singing is vile," he both heard and assented. Mr. V. then added modestly, "O, I forgot to tell you, Sir, that I am *the* Mr. Vivacious, of the Tonic Sol-fa, London!" And, as Mr. V.'s look seemed to imply that the Vicar had, of course, heard of him, the Rev. gentleman obligingly looked as though he certainly had. "Now, Sir, I will give the town the advantage of a course of lessons free, if you will give the use of your school, and also take the chair at my opening lecture." Now,

we cannot be sure that the Vicar fully realised the magnificence of this offer, but, as one of the Vicar's great delights was to preside on "important occasions," and as it would, also, cost him nothing, he agreed with alacrity, and the thing was arranged on the spot. Mr. Vincent then volunteered a few private explanations to the future chairman, in order to prime him for his duties, and then returned to his lonely lodgings, and was soon busy in drawing up a poster and advertisement. "Let me see," he said, "I must put some titles after my name, everybody has handles now-a-days; I won't put M.C., people might think I were a dancing master; I shall put C.T., and that aint enough! Let me see, what else? there's my lodge, capital! I belong to the Odd Fellows—the 'Very Odds' as our chaps is called;" so the following announcement soon adorned the walls of Downatone, in red, white, and blue:

TONIC SOL-FA
LECTURE,
BY
VINCENT VIVACIOUS, Esq., A.O.V.O.F.A.C.T.,
(Of the London Tonic Sol-fa Choirs.)
MONDAY NEXT, AT 8,
IN THE PARISH SCHOOLS.
Everybody invited to bring their children.
The Rev. SAMUEL M'SERMON in the chair.
ADMISSION FREE!!!

SIGNS OF GROWING INTEREST.

This bill created immense excitement among the rustics. Little knots of country folk gathered round the flaming poster, and gave it their most enlightened attention. "Whoat be toanics, lad?" said one labourer to another. "Woole, bothered if a' know, Tammas, but a' fancy it be summut for the stomack!" "No! that it bean't," said another, "ma b'lief is that its a black feller, whoat come from Chiny, or some furrin parts, who's been used to bow down to idols." "Yes!" echoed a woman, "and the other chap's a bit o' a missionary loike, or a' be sure t' parson 'ud have nowght to do wi't." Thus they speculated, until all Downatone was upon the tip-toe of curiosity, and determined to solve the problem by going to the lecture. When the night came, the room was crowded long before the time. Vincent was all excitement, and in a glow of delightful expectation of triumph. He had hung up the modulator, and found the time hung heavily till he should begin. The Rev. Chairman was punctual, and ready to commence proceedings at a moment's notice. There was, also, a strong muster of the local talent, ready to stand or fall by local institutions. They had got wind of an innovation, and evidently meant mischief. At the exact hour, the chairman and lecturer mounted the platform amid much applause and much curiosity, sometimes audibly expressed. "Why, where be Tonic Sol-fa?" said one; and "Where's Mr. Vivacious,

Esq.; that can't be he, why that's the new postman!" But everything was now hushed for the

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

"Ladies and gentlemen,—I may be permitted to say I have much pleasure in occupying the position in which I find myself placed on this very interesting occasion. (Hear.) I am sure all are prepared to hear the—I may say—eloquent words which the lecturer would in short say to them. I have no knowledge at all of the system called Phonic"—("Tonic Sŏl-fa" suggests Vincent)—"Ah, yes, the Tonic Fa La—I may say—system of teaching music; in fact—I rejoice to say—nor of any other system! (Hear.) In short, I never could understand the notes a bit! (Applause.) Yet, I am told—and it rejoices my heart to hear it said—that there is better music in Downatone Church than can be found in any other place within one hundred miles. (Much applause, vigorously led by the village blacksmith.) But there was a kind of singing in other places of meeting where there might be improvement." (This innocent hit at the dissenters was uproariously applauded also.) "I shall now proceed to inform you, ladies and gentlemen, that Mr. Vivacious has informed me that the Chronic Sol-fa is not a new thing, (hear, hear) or you may be assured *I* should not have sanctioned it. (More cheers.) Like all good things, it is —in short—*old.* . . . It is now my duty to introduce the

lecturer, Mr. Vivacious, A.O.V.O.F.A.C.T., to the meeting, and in doing so I have much pleasure in seeing by his titles, which, though I do not precisely understand them, I have no doubt, are the rewards of his attainments in the science of music."

THE LECTURE.

Ushered in by this vague laudation, Vivacious rose, and with so much alacrity that, the baize-covered platform being rather slippery, he nearly made a "header" among the audience, but, as just then there was a burst of applause when the chairman sat down, Vincent had time to recover more of his footing than of his presence of mind. And the latter was in sore need of recruiting, for unluckily every fine and ingenious introduction which he had planned took to itself wings, and he found himself "on his legs" and feeling as much "off his head" as he ever did in his life. So he began with the original sentence, "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am here this evening"—here he hesitated, and the people cheered. While the cheering went on—which Vincent devoutly hoped would be for an indefinite time—he endeavoured to revive his mental powers by various pieces of proverbial philosophy relating to the subject, of which he had read, such as "keep yourself cool" (Vivacious felt awfully hot), "look at your audience" (this he tried to do, but the hundreds of curious faces made him hotter, so his eyes went up for help to the

ceiling, and seemed inclined to linger there), "put yourself on good terms with your audience by a pleasantry or two" (he never felt more serious in his life!). These suggestions flashed through the mind of our lecturer as the applause gradually subsided. "These things are all very well," he said to himself, "but the bother's to do it. I don't seem to be able to think what I was going to say first!" So he said the same thing again, but more affectionately: "Dear Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am here this evening"—and, remembering he was to appear at ease, he thrust his hand into the pocket of his trousers to accomplish that end,—"I am here this evening, gentlemen and ladies, to give you a kind of a lift in the matter of singing. Mr. Chairman, I feel"—here he suddenly started and stopped, for he *didn't* feel his purse in the pocket into which he had put his hand, and, consequently, began to think about that, in fact, it startled him so that he ejaculated audibly, "Ah, I changed 'em!" The audience, applying this to people who had been improved by his teaching, again cheered, which brought Vincent to himself. So, in a kind of vigorous despair, he liberated his hand and dashed out at once, as though his tongue were suddenly untied: "Sol-fa is a glorious thing! I'll explain it to you in the 'twinkling of a hye,' as the saying is. (A laugh.) 'Tisn't one of your unnatural things like your gridiron notes with tadpoles a frying on it. No! that is not neither useful nor ornamental.

Tonic is a thing of real life! Do the birds of the hair use crotchets? I reply no! (Cheers.) Do the beasts of the fields use naturals and bars? (A voice, 'Yes, there be bars to gates!' but on went Vincent, despising the interruption.) I reply no! Do the inanimate creation use your quavers? I reply again, no! (Mr. Vivacious was glad of the succeeding uproar; it gave time to get breath.) I say Sol-fa is true to real life! Why our very first note is Doh! and who don't know what dough is? (Bravo.) Why isn't Do the very foundation and staff of life? ('Yes, it be when it is baked,' cried a voice), and so we call our first note Do, because it is the foundation of musical life. (Hear.) Then the Tonic is a key; now what is more useful than a key? Why nothing! I believe our future ancestors will put the name of Guydo, who invented the key-tone, from out of an old hymn, higher up on the scroll of fame than the name of Handel, who only gave the key a turn or two! (Vincent's energy and the name of Handel, which the chairman caught, made him nod assent, so the people cheered again.) The key is the foundation of everything, and I'll bet a penny, when you have had a few o' my lessons, you'll sing like steam ingins. (This promise quite inflamed the rustics with vocal zeal.) When I dissipate a few ideas into your minds, why lots o' yer will sing as effluviently as you can talk! (Hear.) Now, some folks is much opposed to Sol-fa, and why? Why because they don't know a bit about it. Why some

people try it for a week, and because they don't learn like magic, they run it down like a bull at a gate. (Hear, hear.) Why, you don't expect a child to get on so fast in jography. No, they may jog along in that (and Vincent and the people laughed together). You don't put a boy into fractions before he knows his numbers, and expect him to be a ready reckoner in a week, do yer? (Shouts of 'No, o' course not.') No; he has to be a hadder first, and to know how many beans make five (much applause from the children). And you don't place a girl into the dictionary and expect her to write a hessay at once. No; let me tell you it was some time before *I* could speak with volubility, and frequency; sich things ain't done in a day (very ironical 'hear' from the surgeon, who had just entered, but Vivacious didn't understand that sort of thing, so he went on). But if anybody can talk at all it must come out on this glorious subject of singin'. Its influence upon future ages has been remarkable. Every nation has its natural tunes. Singing is the music for me! None o' yer instruments o' torture for me! Instruments is nothink to the human voice. You may keep your fiddles and pipes and barrel organs for me. (This happy remark created a shower of groans from the church 'players on instruments,' which made Vivacious start, but he had now got so warm in his speech that he rushed along defiantly). Ah! you may growl (more groans), but vocal music is the thing; throw your

instruments to the moles and bats (more noise), and sing; everything around us sings! The birds, and bees, and the crickets; each sings his proper notes, which is his natural element! (hear, and groans). Now let us be practicable (hear). It's my aim in life, and I'll show you how to do it (jeers and cheers). You see this ladder (pointing to the modulator). This is a bird's eye view of music. The inventor of this moddlelator says it's his backbone, because it is such a support to his system (great laughter). Now, this *Do* in the middle, is the key. Now, I'll sing it first, and you do it next. (Vivacious hereupon endeavours to sing a steady *doh*, but he has been talking so fast that he makes a cracked sound, which the choir and audience were only too delighted to imitate, and which they did, producing such a terrific yell, that it nearly floored the lecturer on the spot). "Very good," he said, with a faint smile, "try again." *He* tried again, and *they* roared again, so that it woke the chairman with a start, exclaiming, "What's the matter?" Vivacious having assured him that the place was *not* on fire, resumed his subject, while the chairman resumed his doze. But the choir now meant mischief, and began to chaff, incited by the surgeon, who saw through Vincent's attainments. In vain he said, "this is *soh*," they repeated "Lor', *so* it is." He said, "That is *me*," and they said they "shouldn't ha' thought it," and laughed to their hearts' content. Vincent was now in a profuse perspiration,

and moreover, getting cross, so he thought he would change the subject. "Perhaps, Mr. chairman, you never heard of mental effecks" (here the Vicar woke suddenly and nodded violently). "Well, I'll show you how it's done. No sounds are alike in music. Now, what do you think o' this?" said he, singing the 7th of key G. "Why, that's F sharp," said the organist. "So it is!" said Vincent, astonished (the people now applauded their organist), "but it is what we call *Te*, you know. I'll sing another." So he sang another sound at random. "Why, that's E flat," said the organist, who had a quick ear. "No it isn't, it's *Fah*," says Vivacious, "I'll show you by my pitchfork." Vincent out with his pitchfork, and found that *he* had changed his key, and that his *Fah was* E flat. This nearly quenched him, the organist triumphed, and so long did the people cheer their native talent, that Vivacious thought he had better finish, which he did amid much interruption. "Gentlemen, you had better come and try when prejudiced people, who has an eye only for their salary, doesn't interrupt us (groans). We should all sing, and use the art, and not let it lie hid in a bushel. No, never say you can't. Don't say your voice is rough, nor other vain equivocations (much noise). All natural things which breathe put you to shame, from the kittle which sings on the hob to the humble hass, which sings before the rain!" Such cries greeted this very original remark, that the chairman awoke, began to think

it time to leave, slipped quietly out, and for the finish of the meeting, Vincent Vivacious never could account. He had an undefinable notion of a very hurried exit from the room, amid yells of laughter, and the next day had the lively satisfaction of seeing a report of his sayings and doings in the *Downatone Observer*, which gave a painfully facetious account of his lecture, and also the following comments:—

"We happen to have heard previously of the new system of teaching music, which the lecturer so ridiculously attempted to explain; otherwise, measuring the system by the teacher, we should at once have condemned it as a jargon of nonsense. It is a pity that zeal and indiscretion should thus jeopardise the propagation of a system of musical instruction, which, from what we have previously learned of its merits, would soon revolutionise the aspect of popular music in England.—ED."

Strange to say, Vincent Vivacious, Esq., Ancient Order Very Odd Fellows, and Certificated Teacher, thought himself an ill-used man; he sought another appointment, left Downatone in indignation, and no doubt, will soon appear again in a more congenial sphere, where ignorance and prejudice will not unite to quell his energies, or slight his eloquence.

MOANS OF A MUSICAL MANIAC.

By Samuel Sonorous.

(Part I.—In very blank verse.)

THEY call me mad! and why should it be said,
Because a man is earnest and sincere,
Therefore he's mad! but I would fain confess
I'm soon made serious, easily made glad.
Folks say I'm "queer," touched in my noddle, "cracked;"
And why? Because, if music's bad, I'm vexed!
Or else, if good, it moves me, mind and soul!
If notes get out of tune, I wince and shrink!
Or when the drum is thumped, it shakes my brain!
Is a man mad because he likes soft drum?
Or loving music, he's to gossip dumb?
If to a concert, I should go to *sing;*
Why sing I will, and nothing hinders me,
If to a concert I should go to *hear;*
Why hear I will; and am I mad for this?

Sane folk to concerts go, sometimes to talk,
See and be seen; Music is second quite.
Not so with me, they say, "He's mad on music,"
"Of no use talking now," "He's in the moon,"

And so they chat, while the sweet "Heavenly Maid,"
Is moving in my soul, and I do hold
Choicest communion, with some mighty mind,
Who harps upon my heartstrings lovingly,
In the mysterious tone-tongue teaching me.

If I should sing a song, they call me maundering,
Because I try to utter it with zeal,
To realise its meaning, depth and height;
To wander with it in the realms of thought,
Of fancy or affection. They can't see;
I like to live in music! I'll be mad
Rather than flounder in a dull, dead sea
Of meaningless, or merely sensual sound;
Making so many tremblings in the air,
The tympanum to tickle! or to roll,
Outside my being, like a bath: my heart,
Untouched; well, call me mad, so I'll remain,
Be madly serious, and not idly sane.

MOAN THE FIRST.

I went to church. You say no wonder that!
But I went up to worship, and to praise.
In such a place, I thought I'd sing. I did;
For I can't see how such sweet service can,

By deputy be done. The people, scared,
Turned round and stared at me with great surprise,
As though I were some curious beast of prey,
Just took to roaring in a sacred way!
This scared me into silence. So I watched
Their worship,—I'd nought else to do.—I vow,
In heathen mosque, and temple, we may find
Pagans performing penances and prayers,
To rude divinities, with such a mien,
As puts these Christian worshippers to shame.

For while the sacred hymns were sung by some,
Others were yawning, or admiring dress,
Fitting on gloves, or in the loudest strain,
Seizing the happy moment, they bring out
Their scents, or pocket handkerchiefs and blow
A nasal blast so loud; o'ertopping song!
This and like trifles, served to while away
The sacred time for God's most holy praise!
And then the few who sang, seemed scarce to know
What it all meant, or if the words they used
Were shouted into vacancy or heaven!

Is't thus they would address their fellow-men?
When came soft words of penitence and prayer,
They roared them out, as though it were to Baal!

And when delicious joy thrilled through the verse,
Their voices trailed in tattered shreds behind.
Here was a worshipper with deepest bass,
Most acrobatic was his huge display,
Performing wondrous feats in great attempts,
To do the air! and close behind my ear
Th' impromptu "second" maker walked in thirds
Right through the tune; despising harmonies!
The *Choir*, which sat above the congregation,
Shouted regardless, e'en as though it were,
"Just like the people's' impudence to sing!"
They undertook the worship, and when backed
By organist and blower, they could do
Praise for the *nation*, let alone that few!

And ere 'twas over; weary people dropped,
Into their seats again, with every sign
Of being bored; 'twas a good business done.
Yet, when the sermon came, oh! how with eyes
Glistening with interest and ardent hope,
With mien intent, and nearly every face
Radiant with high resolves and admiration,
Respectful listeners to a human voice!
Yet to sing praise to God, so sweetly grand,
These same poor *worshippers* could hardly stand!

I listened to the sermon after that,
I stayed for no more singing, seized my hat;
I thanked my maniac stars that aught so sad
Could not be shared by me, if I were mad.

Moan the Second.

(In Irrational Rhyme.)

I went to a concert, a Mendelssohn feast,
And I thought to myself, "Well here, now, at least,
Only people will come, who like but the best,"
So I settled me down to the programme with zest.

The band was a fine one, the leader, a man
Of mark in his line; no rattling tin can
Represented the drum. "Th' Midsummer Night's Dream,"
With other *morceaux* of the veriest cream;
Some symphonies rare, and sweet bits, light and sad,
Surely this was a prospect to make one's heart glad!
A tap of the baton, and every bow ready
Is waiting to strike the first chord, clear and steady,
When a "gent" with a smirk and a gaily dressed lass,
"Oh, we're sorry to trouble, but pray let us pass?"
Thus I lost my first taste; but I balance my chin,
With an air of devotion; so now to begin,

What delicate touches! what grace, and what art!
The melody, lovely! but, oh! what a start!
Most cruel of crashes!—what horror is that?
I find an old lady, down plump on my hat!
Now what more unmusical interpolation
Could happen to heighten unpleasant sensation?
And I growled, as I straightened my bent and bruised bonnet,
"Bring a soft one next time, and myself will sit on it."

But all this time the tide of luscious sound is flowing by,
Flowing like golden wine upon the ground, while I am dry!
Thirsting to taste, and feel, and bathe my soul,
In waves of tone light; let them o'er me roll!
List to that cataract of giant leap!
See the smooth stream of gentle sweep!
The master's music, leads me now,
By pastures green, and fair. Ah! how
He makes my poor heart leap to his wild chords,
What other art such wondrous joy affords?

* * * * I rub my ear, in listening fear,
That click! click! click! is very near!
Surely Mendelssohn had no such tickling libretto.
I turned me, with look sharp as Spanish stiletto,

And near to me sat, such a shrewd-looking wife,
A knitting some hose, or some socks, I suppose,
For her baby—O bless it!—or partner in life.
The most economic, I almost cried bravo!
In her is embodied, a *multum in parvo*!
On her knee was a *novel*, the while she was reading,
On a bun from a small crackling bag she was feeding!
All tacked on with knitting to Mendelssohn's dream!!
While I, poor mad soul, very odd it may seem,
Found attention distracted, and didn't I rue it,
By seeing the dearly industrious dame do it!

I had put up my collar, to shut out that noise,
When my ear was assailéd by one of those boys,
Who right in the midst of the overture's chorus,
Bade me purchase a "*Programme or Book o' the words!*"
'Twas from dread of loud squalling, and no other fears,
My mad hand refrainéd from boxing his ears!
I look'd at him loudly, I think he took fright,
By noting my wild eyes' most lunatic light.

The worst of it is, when you go out to hear,
Sweet sounds at a concert, sounds that are queer,
Have a horrible way of assaulting the ear.
Thus a fine sense of song's counterbalanced again
By the terrible way, other sounds give us pain.

One can hear very well, and shut up one's eyes,
But if one's near neighbour is munching mince pies,
Biscuits, or buns, good-bye to my peace,
'Tis death to my joy, an unhappy release.

For awhile after that, the fates were propitious,
I'd nearly five minutes of listening, delicious!
I heard not a "click," nor a "words boy!" O nectar!
They all were bound captive by Music; protect her,
Another five minutes—ye muses! from earth.
And receive my best thanks! 'tis all I am worth;
But 'twas not to be; in one part which would seem
More lovely than others, there came a shrill scream,
From a baby in arms! and I madly repented
That such "Chamber" organs were ever invented.

Thus the beautiful end of that wonderful dream,
Like a common night's sleep, it was spoiled by a scream.

Then came a bold march, and some people felt bound,
To show that their sense of true rhythm was sound,
By stamping, with vigour, their feet on the ground;
Like choristers, such as I've too often known,
Who tap to the beat, with finger or feet,
As though they could trust to no time but their own.

But next a sweet ballad was down on the carte,
And I went in for this, with my head and my heart,
When a person in front, to show how he knew it,
Began "sotto voce," an effort to do it;
Accompanying the same with increasing delight,
On the floor with his stick, with main and with might!
So I gave up my Ballad, all pleasure was gone,
And I wildly gazed round me in withering scorn.

But I sat out the concert; *my* duty I know,
Though the last choice selection was signal to go,
For the fine folk, who, wishing for something to eat,
Kept up a great pattering and tramping of feet.
I like to be civil, though mad I may be,
And I think it vile taste, in an audience, to see
An orchestra play every scrap of tone, true;
While they run away! Why I should go too,
If I were so served; if the programme too long,
Why ask for it shorter? and cast out a song.
But I am insane, so I went home to bed,
And dreamed I was knitting the hair of my head,
Into socks for the people with pattering feet,
And poisoning buns, for the people who eat.

MOAN THE THIRD.

Finding small joy in hearing, I thought I would do
Some good music myself.
I was well up in singing; and talents, though few,
Should ne'er rest on the shelf.
The leader was a good one, some said he was severe,
I like a stout, and firm one, who gives no sign of fear!
I went to learn; my share to do,
With steady zeal, and purpose too,
I wished my comrades were as true!
'Tis but the maniac, though, who can dare
To go in for discipline, duty, and care
In an amateur chorus:
Why, are we not free? "I'm not paid to sing!"
"We'll do as we please;" a very fine thing!
Thus to dominate o'er us!

And so some quizzed, and sagely joked;
Some laugh'd, while others' ribs they poked,
Then turn to shouting, then they'd stop,
To suck jujube, or acid drop;
Perhaps it is their sane impression,
That thus they sweeten the expression;
But then this rational diversion,
Made an inevitable incursion,

Into the music's proper rendering;
And in the leader's mind engendering
Vexatious thoughts which utterance found,
In language strong, and with good ground.

He tapped his desk, and made it ring,
And asked them "if they came to sing?
Or suck their sweets, and play like boys!"
O wasn't there an awful noise!
The idlers, voted him a "bore"!
Wouldn't put up with it; quite sure.—
The madmen said "True to the core,"
But after this, they worked and sung,
With energy of lip, and lung.
I hoped they would, these folk with wit,
Indulge in one long serious fit,
But no such good had come of it;
They played, and smiled in serious places,
Amused themselves, with such grimaces,
As should have made them hide their faces.

So things went on, till with a frown,
Once more the leader's stick went down.
He said, in tones indignant fired,
"Go on I can't, tho' *you're not hired.*"

You *undertook to sing* when here you came,
And sing you must, or else withdraw your name.
Moral and money obligations are the same."

I and some other lunatics, applauded this,
And for our pains, were greeted with a hiss!
The true-born Briton is so very free,
To abuse his fellow is his liberty.
It seems as natural as sweethearts kissing,
For ill-used Britishers to take to hissing;
But when the leader took his hat to go,
Reaction came, they did not want it so,
They could not but respect the man who thus,
Himself respected; so loud calls from us,
The maniacs of pure song, soon brought him back,
Which made the wise folk, take another tack;
They rivalled us in skilful exhibition,
Till sane and soft, had quite a competition,
Which should the best sustain the fugue with fire,
Who should be first to sing, and last to tire.

Once more, hard work, was found a bond uniting,
Rude discord ceased, they had no time for fighting.
And here 'twas proved, a teacher's work is made,
Vexatious and contemptible, if he's afraid,

To claim attention, perfect and profound;
Else all authority will to the ground,
Respect he claims, if he can't gain our love,
And nothing less, his leadership will prove.

Some people I know,
Will never dare go
To a concert to sing,
To appear in a choir,
For men to admire,
Is so serious a thing!
As tho' in a huge chorus, where folks come to hear,
There should be a sensation, when I should appear!
Or if for some reason,
We meditate treason,
And say, "I shan't sing!"
'Tis a natural notion,
'Twould cause a commotion,
And damage the thing.

So there's the joy which music madmen find,
They're so engrossed—in fact, "out of their mind"—
To such condition are they often brought,
They feel reward, in doing what they ought.
Thus, thinking "Virtue is its own reward,"
In music, I go in for working hard.

My eyes are rarely taken off the "stick,"
I seldom go too slow, never too quick.
I don't go in for an unmeaning shout,
But try to know, just what it's all about.

'Tis grand to be, sunk in the bosom deep
Of a huge choir.
Its throbbing tides, they make one's spirit leap,
Kindling to fire.

Breakers of sound lash round me, like a sea;
I battle in it, tiny though I be.
Doing my share of lashing manfully.
I reject small talk when I go to sing,
For heart, head, and voice, the music's the thing.
No choir "wags" for me, no grumblers, or bores:
I'm "engaged," till I'm landed safe back on earth's shores.
The grand art will tend thus to make us all better,
So I must at least have, the spirit and letter;
But then you see, I'm weak about my thatch,
And ought to join a choir in Colney Hatch.
A doctor's "crotchet," luckiest of flukes,
Just saved me from the "bars" of dull St. Luke's.

But it seemed so odd that a fellow should stand
Upright in a choir, with his book in his hand,
And join in the play of the musical strife,
As though 'twere the only great business of life.

Thus when the grand thunder of Handel is heard,
Divided attention, to me, is absurd.
When Israel's woes, and fights with her foes,
The wonders of fire,—the wonders of hail,—
When plagues fierce and dire, do Egypt assail,
I'm in the mightiest scenes, oppressed with awe,
As *I* the Red Sea cross'd, its wonders saw.
The fire in my heart, leaps up to my frown,
All triflers beware, until I come down!
On this mountain of music, mysterious and grand,
A maniac has lost all control of his hand.

Some call themselves musical when they can chaff
While solos are sung, or else raise a laugh,
While Elijah is pleading religious and sad,
Perhaps whisper, ask riddles, or equally bad,
Accompany the rich golden thread of the master,
With commonplace questions,—the latest disaster,
Which came to their appetites, coat tails, or shoes,
Disturbed their small spirits, or gave them the "blues."
And then when the chorus comes, up with a start,
Contented with knowing the mere sounds by heart,—
Mind and heart are left out!—
They sing like the roughs who are hired to attend,
At the hustings, for those, who laws make and mend,
For sixpence to shout.

I've seen this kind of amateur—
Until it did me well nigh cure,
Of all ambition thus to aid,
In choruses; but I'm afraid,
If all the mad folk thus deserted song,
Music would leave this lower world ere long!

MOAN THE FOURTH.

I have a frenzied notion, I confess,
That music's meant to increase our happiness,
Thus I would have its joy in all our schools,
Trill round the workshop, and inspire the tools,
Let children claim their place in public praise,
As well as those who in life's later days,
Desire to share, although in feebler strains,
Its joys to comfort, through remaining pains.

So in the home, I like to hear the singing,
Now in true worship, now in gladness ringing!
So I suppose it to have come to pass,
In social circles, that each festive glass,
Is cheered with festive song.
Piano's tuned at Christmas tide at least,
And every man who sings not, spoils the feast;
The social tune, is strong.

But musical parties so-called are a snare
Of which I now bid fellow-madmen beware!
Of all the delusions we are called on to see,
This musical sham is the strangest to me.
The people professedly met here to sing,
Or play, care but little so long as the ring
Of their tongues can be heard;
While the singer is raving in frenzy divine,
The audience is talking while sipping its wine,
For listening is absurd!
And is it not cruel, unmanly, unkind!
To hear young Miss Quivering,
Who long has been shivering,
Frightened poor little thing, brought from behind
A knot of loud chatterers, placed on a stool,
And asked to perform to a Babel of tongues,'
With no chance of a hearing for stoutest of lungs;
While choicely they call her "a poor little fool,
Who thinks she can sing." Why the poor little soul
Has been working for weeks to attain this same goal.
And now when her heart is fearful and fluttering,
Not a soul hears a word of all she is uttering.

She retires to her corner, dreadfully red,
With an ache in her heart, and a pain in her head.

Now, a soft-hearted fellow who's soft in the pate,
Most decidedly gets in a desperate state,
And thinks that society's heartless and cold,
Thus to snub the poor musical lambs of the fold.
The clever pianist meets just the same fate,
Plays accompaniments sweet, to a chorus of prate.
Folks think it polite when they ask one to sing,
But to ask them to listen; "ridiculous thing!"
So little John Johnson, a tenor of note,
With perfect command of both chest, voice, and throat,
Sings "Good-bye, Sweetheart," with a tear in his eye,
And "Come into the Garden," with mouth all awry,
Lays his hand on his chest, which throbs with emotion,
Expecting to find he has caused a commotion,
Turns round with a bow, thinks to find all intent,
When one asks, as though 'twere a choice compliment,
"What the name of the song was," and "who was it wrote it?"
"Where it was to be got?" till Johnson doth vote it
Both tiresome and dull, so he vows on the spot,
He don't sing again, no, he'd "rather be shot!"

Don't mention the duet 'tween Bowen and Digit,
This so hinders talk as to cause quite a fidget:
Digit bangs the piano, with right and with left,
And Bowen bows blindly, as if quite bereft

Of command of his "funny bone!" Johnson is glad
They have silenced the talkers, delighted the mad!
When the "basso profundo," with no end of soul,
And of wind, does the "wolf," who, "with hideous howl,"
The people are caught for a moment, and tap
With their feet on the floor, or the fans in their lap,
But "locks, bolts, and bars" can't keep them quite under,
They soon talk again, notwithstanding his thunder.

And then the glee they try to troll,
"Who'll sing the *seconds?*" not a soul!!!
So poor Mr. Smith, who knows not a letter
Of notes, says he'll help with a "little falsetter."

Then the false starts, and hemmings and hawings, so fine,
Are far too delicious for such taste as mine,
'Twas a dismal affair, this music concerted,
No wonder 'twas found that the audience deserted.
But didn't they come from their whist and their wine
To list to the voice of a charmer divine—
De Doggrell, the comique, with weak wit and patter,
Soon gets the attention—poor music! "O drat her!"
"We like some good fun; a joke and a spree
Are better than all your fine singing for me!"

Concluding Moan.

It is my mad opinion, from the things herein named,
That times are gone bad, in this century, famed.
For music, the art which, to hearts most appealing,
When once she's bereft of the spirit's true feeling,
Will fold her sweet wings, to the dismalest "croon,"
And never be found nearer home than the moon.

W. M. HUTCHINGS, PRINTER, 5, BOUVERIE STREET, FLEET STREET, E.C.